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# WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS 1945-1985



*"We came together in our World Conference from many lands. We represented all races, colours and creeds. We spoke to one another in different languages. But we were united upon the objectives which we, as workers, share with all freedom-loving peoples. Our deliberations in the World Conference enable us to declare, with emphasis, and without reservations, that the Trade Union Movement of the world is resolved to work with all like-minded peoples to achieve a complete and uncompromising victory over the fascist powers that sought to encompass the destruction of freedom and democracy; to establish a stable and enduring peace; and to promote in the economic sphere the international collaboration which will permit the rich resources of the earth to be utilised for the benefit of all its peoples, providing full employment, rising standards of life, and social security to the men and women in all nations.*

(FROM THE MANIFESTO  
ADOPTED  
BY THE WORLD TRADE UNION  
CONFERENCE, LONDON,  
FEBRUARY 1945)



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# THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS 1945-1985

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PUBLISHED BY THE WFTU  
IN COOPERATION WITH «PRACE»  
CZECHOSLOVAK TRADE UNIONS  
PUBLISHERS PRAGUE

OCTOBER 1985

The Secretariat of the WFTU dedicates this publication to the 40th anniversary of its foundation. Research for the history was carried out by *Evžen Erban* (Czechoslovakia, founder of the WFTU), *Mahendra Sen* (India, ex-WFTU Secretary), *Luis C. Turiansky* (Uruguay, political advisor to the Secretariat), and *Emilio Pereira* (Spain, head of Documentation Centre). Sources referred to may be found in the annexes.  
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Published in English, French and Spanish.

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## To the reader

*The pages which follow are in no way intended to present a full history of the WFTU and certainly not of the trade union movement as a whole. They are a modest contribution to the celebrations for the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the world trade union centre. At the most, we hope that historians will find this work stimulating and that it will further encourage researchers to fill the considerable gaps in the history of contemporary social strife.*

*In a straight-forward and concise manner, we have tried to outline the origins and the growth of an organization which, for forty years, has constantly served the interests of workers around the world, unity and international solidarity over and above political, philosophical or religious persuasion and regardless of race, colour, nationality and social system or level of economic development in their respective countries. In this way we hope this will be a source of inspiration for new generations of trade unionists.*

*Nevertheless, two points must be clarified right from the start: Firstly, this is the work of contemporary authors, hence their insight into the matters dealt with here corresponds to*



6 *the current needs of the trade union movement, which itself has changed considerably since the beginning and is now characterized by rich experiences and great diversity, which is not easy to portray in such a short brochure. Secondly, it is based on a study of the documents available, particularly in the WFTU archives, with reference to other authors (see bibliography). There are however some inevitable shortcomings.*

*The forty years of the World Federation of Trade Unions cannot, of course, have been totally trouble — and error-free: this is only human. They are, however, a testimony to the selfless devotion to the cause of the workers to honesty, sacrifice and loyalty to the worthy united principles upon which the WFTU was built.*

*We have tried our very best to reflect these qualities in this work and we hope that the reader will understand any omissions in this work.*

*Editors.*

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## Roots

Since the capitalist structured relations of the production process gave birth to the working classes, they have always naturally tended to unite in order to defend their vital interests as a class.

The workers' desire to associate was clear even before the methods of exploitation were understood and a clear-cut programme of emancipation was established.: they were guided by common interests; and this explains why the exploiting classes, throughout the ages, have spared no efforts in sowing division amongst the ranks of workers once they realised they could not prevent the increase and development of organizations which are generally referred to as components of «the workers' movement».

A prominent place within this movement is occupied by the trade unions: organizations of workers united through their workplace, trade or industrial branch, who pledge to promote the immediate and long-term interests of all workers, without exception, in their specific field of action and

8 who then organize on a national, regional or international level.

The creation of the WFTU in 1945, representing the broadest trade union unity on a world scale to date, did not happen by chance: it was the culmination of over one century's worth of efforts to form an organization, the result of struggles and the experiences of the united action of workers of the most varied persuasions. It was the triumph of the ideals of peace and social progress, of international class solidarity over and above national borders and ideological barriers.

Today the WFTU draws inspiration from the historic legacy which was embodied in its foundation, the roots of which are nurtured by the working class themselves.

#### ORIGINS

Being the country where the industrial revolution began in the 18th century, England could be seen as the cradle of the trade union movement. The first workers' associations were formed there in the late 18th and early 19th century. In contrast to the medieval guilds that included in their ranks all the workers of a given trade, whether owners of the means of production or not, the new organizations corresponded to the development of industrial production and had a clear class nature being solely for wage-earning workers.

Quite naturally this movement originated in the countries in Europe and North America where industry was developing most. In the early stages there were various organizations of mutual assistance, whose chief purpose was to stand by their members in cases of illness, accident, loss of job, widowhood etc.; simultaneously there emerged elementary forms of economic cooperation such as consumer or production cooperatives. However, the ruthless exploitation of the workers soon led to struggles for their claims and demands. The most usual method was strike action which, in

the past, was resorted to by craftsmen not belonging to guilds; in the hands of the workers, it became a most powerful weapon.

Understanding the goals of struggle was a long and complex process: it started with an intuitive reaction to destroy machinery and factories, the symbols of capitalist appropriation of the means of production, and resulted in the understanding that the cause of poverty lies in unjust social relations and not in technological development.

At that point it became apparent that the struggle for immediate claims and demands had to be combined with independent political action by the working class, based on various programmes of social reform.

The diversity of political options in the labour movement and the need to correctly combine the immediate and long-term aspirations of the workers are features seen in the trade union movement from the very beginning.

With regard to organization, too, the trade union movement is the product of a slow development that followed the specific traditions and conditions of individual countries. Yet, on the whole, organization began according to trades, typical of medieval guilds, which continued to exist for some time in the trade union movement, then gradually gave way to inter-trade unity at various workplaces, in accordance with the growing socialization of production and capitalist concentration in large-scale enterprises. The workers gradually realized that their strength was in unity.

From isolated actions that the State could easily repress, actions became coordinated in entire industrial sectors or even in a whole country; the fundamental idea of solidarity was thus developed.

The first attempts to set up national trade union organizations were also in England: in 1831 the *National Association for the Protection of Labour* was founded; in 1834 Robert Owen founded the *Grand National Consolidated Trades Union*, which was to become the predecessor of modern trade unions.



Nevertheless, we should note that the development of trade unionism was not without its problems. On the contrary, the bourgeois governments of the time were fiercely opposed to the movement.

In England itself, trade union activities were illegal until 1824 and any member of trade unions incurred serious fines due to the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800. The six *Tolpuddle Martyrs* were sentenced to seven years exile in 1834 for trying to organize farmworkers. Indeed, the trade unions were not recognized by English law until 1875.

In France, the right to organize in trade unions was attained in 1884. Even the revolution of 1789-92 did not result in any progress in this respect. In Italy, strikes were against the law until 1889. In Germany, only workers in industry were permitted to join a union and even then many restrictions were placed upon them. In the United States, although officially legal, the trade unions were subject to arbitrary persecution until as late as the 19th century, due to the *Sherman Act* in 1890, also known as «*Anti-Trusts Act*».

Trade union rights, which today are enshrined in many different forms of national legislation and in the international conventions of the International Labour Organization, are the result of the struggles of the workers who, on occasions, have been extremely courageous.

Attempts by reactionary forces to repress this new social force were in vain. The original concept of workers' solidarity spread rapidly over and above national frontiers.

In 1836, William Lovett, Secretary of the London Workingmen's Association, asked the workers of Belgium in his address:

*"If monarchs can unite, then why can the producers of wealth not form their own holy alliance?"*

At that time, there were many attempts to establish international coordination of workers' action, but conditions were not fully ripe.

The 1840s saw deep economic depression with the subsequent deterioration in the situation of the working masses. In 1848, a revolutionary wave swept Europe, overthrowing absolutist monarchies and eradicating the vestiges of feudalism wherever possible. The working class took an active part in the democratic revolutions and made the greatest sacrifices, however, the fruits of the people's struggle were finally commandeered by the bourgeoisie for their exclusive benefit. It became increasingly obvious that the working class could no longer rely on the promises of the ruling classes if they wished to obtain genuine emancipation.

This is why the most aware forces of the working class founded, in 1864, the «*International Working Men's Association*» or «*First International*». Its fundamental purpose was two-fold: formulate the much-needed independent political programme of the working class ("The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves", said the Rules) and international solidarity.

It is worth mentioning, in passing, since the experience was to be repeated frequently throughout history each time new unity was forged, that international mergers were always preceded by the creation of bodies to foster bilateral relations such as the «*Anglo-French Liaison Committee*», founded in 1862.

The various trends which at that time were active within the workers' movement managed to group together in the First International. The organization was conceived as a single front for all components, political and popular, of this movement, including the trade unions. It was also open to direct affiliation of individuals. However, the organization was riddled with internal ideological disputes until it was disbanded by the Philadelphia Congress in 1876.

Despite its brief life, the First International played a decisive role in organizing the workers and in their class-based training.



Meanwhile, the spectre of cyclical crisis was back on the scene. The radical political deterioration which this produced became worse with the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871. The French people suffered the ignomy of foreign occupation and the betrayal of the ruling classes. In March 1871, the people of Paris revolted and formed the Commune, which was to be the first attempt at workers' government in the world. This heroic uprising lasted for just 72 days: internal reaction, with the support of foreign troops managed to drown it in blood; it is estimated that 30,000 of the «communards» were massacred and many more were put behind bars or sent to the gallows; tens of thousands took refuge in other countries.

Nevertheless, the Paris Commune remains alive in the hearts and minds of all those struggling for justice and social progress. The vast quantity of progressive laws enacted during its brief existence revealed to the world the aspirations of the workers for a more just society. Its downfall brought about by international reactionary forces, in spite of the heroic fight put up by its defenders, offered invaluable lessons on the class struggle; throughout history the terror which followed this downfall was, time and time again, to be inflicted upon counter-revolutionaries.

After the setback imposed by the counter-revolution, in the 1880s a new boom was to be seen in workers' struggles. Their main demand was a shorter working week.

At that time workers suffered extremely inhumane exploitation; in some places they were even forced to work 16 hours or more per day, they were virtually outcasts, excluded from culture and education and riddled with disease. In 1866, the Geneva Congress of the 1st International had already called for an 8-hour day as it was the "indispensable condition for the success of any other attempt at liberation". An 8-hour day, 8 hours to rest and 8 hours for culture and education, this was the rational way of dividing up the day

which was to become an essential demand to protect the worker as a human being.

This movement reached mass proportions in the 1880s in the United States. In 1884, the workers' organization, «*Knights of Labor*», insisted that the 8-hour day be implemented throughout the country as from Saturday, May 1st, 1886, which was normally a working day. The strikes and demonstrations staged on this day in the main industrial centres, particularly in Chicago, filled the authorities with panic.

The tremendous success of the action was encouraging, and in Chicago, the strike continued on Monday 3rd and on Tuesday 4th a peaceful meeting of workers was called in Haymarket Square. The police, particularly on edge due to the development of events, attacked: an isolated gunshot, the origins of which are still unknown, caused widespread shooting and a massacre: over 200 dead were left in the square and the main leaders were arrested.

The farcical trial which then began, ended in the death sentence for the 8 Chicago martyrs: *Albert Parson, August Spies, Samuel Fielden, Michael Schwab, George Engel, Adolph Fischer, Louis Lingg, Oscar Neeb*.

Shortly before being executed on November 11, 1887, August Spies was to pronounce these fateful words:

*"The day will come when our silence in the grave will be louder than our voices."*

The crime, in actual fact, was to produce the opposite result to that expected by its perpetrators: a wave of indignation swept the world and the struggle for an 8-hour day was stepped up in memory of the martyrs.

In 1889, the centenary of the French Revolution, representatives of the socialist movement of various countries met in Paris and founded the *Socialist Workers' International*, or the *2nd International*. Meanwhile, the recently founded American Federation of Labour, AFL, had convened a new strike for the anniversary of the Chicago events on May 1st,

14 1890. The 2nd International decided to embark on action, and appealed to workers throughout the world to organize simultaneous demonstrations in all countries on this day. Thus, *May 1st, international day of workers, was born*. It was no coincidence that, as an international day of solidarity, this day was originally a day of homage to the martyrs of the working class. The success of this day in 1890 led to the historic decision to turn this day into a day of action each year.

The following year, in 1891, mass participation on May 1st was even greater. But so too were the repressive measures taken by the authorities: for example, in the French town of Fourmies, demonstrators, including many women and children, were literally riddled with bullets by the army.

Repression and violence have gone hand in hand with May 1st since the very beginning. However, May 1st has, with time, become a day of mass action by people seeking liberation. May 1st in the socialist countries is a time for assessing victories already achieved and provides inspiration for further efforts. In many other countries workers have made it their day and it is now recognized as a holiday by law in many countries.

#### THE GROWTH OF TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

At a time when the labour movement was intent on finding its own specific path, fairly close relations between the unions and organized political trends were already in evidence. In many instances, trade union organizations were part of a party structure; for example, the British TUC provided a decisive contribution to the founding of the Labour Party and remains to this day one of its components.

At the other extreme were trends that denied the unions the right to speak on political issues. Samuel Gompers, for several decades leader of the AFL in the United States, attempted to promote an apolitical "pure and simple trade unionism", which actually left it defenceless against «politics» considered as the exclusive ground of the ruling classes.

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Yet during this period the need for trade union unity, despite differences in political options, was becoming increasingly important. During the second half of the 19th century the world changed rapidly. The growth of capitalist concentration led to the setting up of monopolies. Imperialism emerged, bringing with it the division of the world amongst the Big Powers and the plunder of the natural resources of other peoples. Simultaneously, the ranks of the working class throughout the world grew very quickly. Towards 1900, 4 million workers were already unionized. The trade unions became powerful mass organizations. Large independent national centres appeared, such as the General Confederation of Labour (Confédération Générale du Travail — CGT) founded in France in 1895.

The expansion of the monopolies in entire production and distribution sectors emphasized the need to strengthen trade unions; especially on a trade or industrial level; a natural tendency emerged towards uniting local trade unions in large industrial federations. With the growing internationalization of the economy it became clear that industrial or trade-level trade union action had to be coordinated on an international scale.

The «*International Trade Secretariats*» (ITS) were founded in response to this need. At the beginning of this century these international trade union structures already covered 17 different branches including Graphic Arts, Mining, Building, Textile, Metallurgy and Transport. In 1903, the «*International Trade Union Secretariat*» (the coordinating body of all the ITSs) was founded which, in 1913, was to become the *International Federation of Trade Unions* (IFTU). This could be considered as a first attempt to create a world trade union centre.

On the eve of the First World War, the official membership of the IFTU rose to 8 million workers, organized in 19 national centres, virtually all in Europe and North America.



- 16 However, the real trade union stakes were much more colourful than the IFTU actually made them out to be...

#### AN UNAVOIDABLE DETOUR

Here we must take a short detour in order to put the finishing touches to the picture of workers' struggle. Undoubtedly, unequal development of capitalism made vast regions in the world fall behind somewhat in their own development and concentrated industrial development in Europe and North America, which was also the heart of the working class, but social strife was also present on other continents or subcontinents.

In Latin America in particular a relatively numerous and organized working class already existed half way through the 19th century, due to the relative capitalist development in some countries (Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay amongst others). Immigrants from Europe had brought with them the revolutionary ideas and experiences of the international workers movement. Thus, for instance, the first world commemoration of May 1st, in 1890, was also celebrated in Argentina, Cuba and Mexico. Towards the end of the century, some countries on the subcontinent already possessed a powerful trade union movement and sectors of the 2nd International had already been set up in many places.

The first national trade union centres in Latin America were founded in Peru (1884), Uruguay (1875), Argentina (1890), Cuba (1890), Chile (1909), Mexico (1912), Bolivia (1912) and El Salvador (1914). In 1909, a conference in Buenos Aires brought together trade union organizations from six countries of the region.

In Africa, despite the harsh conditions of colonialism, workers were resisting oppression and staging heroic struggles, particularly miners and dockers. One of the first strikes recorded by the colonial authorities was the dock

strike in Freetown in 1874; ten years later, an African worker, S.H.A. Case, founded a trade union called «Mechanic's Alliance» and a newspaper «The Artisan».

In the Union of South Africa, the first trade union (carpenters) was founded in Cape Town in 1887. After Boer resistance had been crushed between 1899 and 1902 and British colonialists assumed control over the fabulous gold and diamond mines, there followed a rapid growth of trade unionism and of miners' struggles for their claims and demands, although this was limited to miners of European origin; at that time, the wages paid to an African miner were barely one eighth of that paid to a white miner.

In Asia, the growth of the working class, above all in the textile industry, gave new impetus to the struggle for liberation from the colonial yoke. In India, the first strike took place in 1877, while between 1882 and 1890 there were, in all, 25 strikes in the states of Bombay and Madras. The Bombay textile workers set up a union as early as in 1884. The Labour struggles reached a climax just before the First World War with the six-day general strike by textile workers in Bombay in 1908, in protest against the arrest of their leader, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, by the British government.

In China, industrialization was a slow process, beginning at the end of the 19th century. The first trade unions were set up in 1906 with the Engine Drivers' Union in Kwantung and the postal workers' union in Canton. The 1911 Revolution bolstered the trade union movement.

Unlike the Asian countries under colonial domination, Japan was able to develop an independent capitalist economy. Sen Katayama, Japanese workers' leader and pioneer of the trade union movement, who died in 1933, places the birth of the trade union movement in 1897, the year Tokyo iron and steel workers set up their first union; they were soon followed by other trades. The railwaymen organized a successful strike in 1898. The growth of Japanese trade un-



18 · ions was violently interrupted when the authorities disbanded the unions in 1900.

A full picture of social struggles in Africa, Asia and Latin America at the dawning of the trade union movement still awaits more detailed research by someone who is free of prejudice and uninfluenced by the myths fashioned by imperialism.

It does, however, remain a fact that the workers in undeveloped and dependent countries were not present within the IFTU, which was one of the main weaknesses of this organization. As a matter of fact, the first genuine world trade union centre was, many decades later, to be the WFTU.

### THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Doubly exploited and for centuries victims of social discrimination, working women joined the struggles of their brothers, overcoming many difficulties and prejudices. With a great deal of courage which often went unmentioned, women were at the side of men in the great days of struggle, either giving the men on strike irreplaceable assistance, or directly participating as workers themselves. The fierce exploitation of women and child labour is, today, an additional source of profits for capitalist employers. Women were able to join unions only towards the end of the 19th century...

As part of the general claims and demands platform of the trade union movement, «Equal pay for equal work», a specific claim of women workers, is a goal of elementary social justice. In the political sphere, the struggle is geared to the demand for equal rights to vote for both men and women.

However, for obvious historical reasons, the women's movement, part and parcel of the struggles of all the workers, both men and women, has some particularities that, in turn, enrich the overall experience of the working class. This is how the movement was seen by some of the most aware militants such as Clara Zetkin; on her initiative, an Interna-

tional Conference of Socialist Women, held in Copenhagen in 1910, decided to declare March 8 «International Women's Day», an international day of women's solidarity from all countries in their struggle for peace, democracy and equal rights.

The date was chosen in memory of the large strike of women workers in the New York clothing and footwear industry, held on March 8, 1857 for a ten-hour(!) working day, basic conditions of hygiene and for the same wage as men.

International Women's Day was observed for the first time in 1911 in Germany, Austria-Hungary and Denmark. It has now gained worldwide recognition and is regularly observed by the trade union movement. It is particularly important at the end of the UN Women's Decade (1976-1985).

### THE FIRST DISASTER ON THE HORIZON

In 1905, the International Trade Union Conference adopted a resolution deliberately restricting the sphere of action of the trade union movement to purely representing workers' demands or industrial matters alone, henceforth this resolution made it the exclusive domain of the «political wing» of the workers' movement to deal with the general policy of the working class and their attitude towards various social phenomena, as a counterpart to the tacit recognition of the independence of the trade union movement.

This clear division of duties between the two «wings» of the movement, interpreted in a narrow, rather than independent manner, considerably restricted the independence of trade union organizations, affected their capacity to act and reduced them to mere vehicles for obtaining economic advantages. The numerous requests for the resolution to be re-

20 considered, chiefly submitted by the French CGT, were constantly rejected by a large majority of votes.

This attitude of the majority in the IFTU was to have negative consequences at a time when a disaster was looming over the world: the imperialist powers were preparing a new division of the world and for that purpose were setting up antagonistic military blocs; the tiniest spark would set off the powderkeg...

The labour movement was aware of the enormous danger this implied. At the Stuttgart Congress in 1907, the 2nd International called for "actions to avoid the outbreak of war and, should war break out, to mobilize the masses in order to overthrow the capitalist regime".

But the movement was corroded by nationalist fervour; and the main leaders tacitly submitted to the policy of the respective conflicting states. The healthiest forces, however, continued to keep high the banner of internationalism even after the outbreak of war in 1914.

As far as the IFTU was concerned, it had to pay for its demobilizing concepts and practically ceased to exist amidst the flames engulfing Europe.

#### THE PAINFUL BIRTH OF A NEW WORLD

The 1914-1918 World War sharpened the contradictions within the capitalist system to the maximum. It brought tremendous suffering to the peoples, millions of human lives were sacrificed to the interests of imperialists, many people were disabled, much destruction, hunger and misery was wrought upon the peoples.

At the same time, however, the masses felt a considerable urge towards social change. The world which was to emerge out of the war could never be the same again; the peoples were demanding genuine democratization of society.

In 1917 in Russia, the first socialist revolution triumphed.

Socialism, from a subject of theoretical discussion, became a real alternative. For the first time, a government unilaterally declared peace, distributed land amongst the peasants and announced the peoples' right to self-determination.

A new era was beginning: an era of social revolution and national liberation, an era where the imperialist camp was becoming increasingly narrower.

Under the impact of this historic event, social struggles achieved a new peak at the end of the war between 1918 and 1919. The Austro-Hungarian empire fell to pieces; in Germany a republic was proclaimed and a people's uprising attempted to direct it along socialist lines; other revolutionary attempts took place in Hungary and in Slovakia.

However, the victorious powers had other plans for the distribution of their war booty, plans which came to light in the Treaty of Versailles: revolutions were quashed with bloodshed and fighting, military intervention was organized against the young Soviet state. Nevertheless, the Soviet state showed heroic resistance which was to give rise to a vast movement of international solidarity and the Soviet people rose to the challenge of building a new society without exploitation, nor exploiters in the midst of an enemy blockade.

All these events were bound to have a direct influence on the trade union movement. This is true from two different angles: on the one hand, some of the working class were encouraged by the action of the Russian revolutionaries and found new hope for their own struggle for a better world; on the other hand, vast sectors of big business decided that it was necessary to relax social oppression somewhat, in order to avoid any further revolutionary explosion.

The ranks of the trade union movement began to swell; in 1919 they regrouped a total of 50 million organized workers. At this time Europe and North America were not the only scenes of widespread struggles, the social movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America also started to flourish. Between 1910 and 1917, a radical agrarian revolution shook Mexico, leaving behind it indelible tracks for the entire fu-



22 ture evolution of social struggles in this country. In 1920 the All-India Congress of Trade Unions was founded (AITUC).

But how did the international trade union movement, damaged but not destroyed by war, respond to these challenges?

A further ideological battle developed in its midst, between the partisans of the class struggle and the so-called «reformist» trends which placed their hopes in the negotiating power of the trade unions to promote the interests of workers through a «social agreement» amongst the classes. This concept was supported by many governments in capitalist countries, governments, which in some cases included representatives of the workers' movement. In 1919, the *International Labour Organization* (ILO) was set up as an international tripartite structure to determine labour standards with the assistance of governments, employers and workers.

Controversy sprung up over the division of the movement into different persuasions each with a marked political character.

In February 1919, the Socialist International was reconstructed. In July, the same year, an International Trade Union Congress met in Amsterdam and agreed to re-found the International Federation of Trade Unions, which was known as the «*Amsterdam International*». Its sphere of action continued, however, to be restricted to industrialized capitalist countries (as early as 1936 it opened up to the Confederation of Workers of Mexico which joined the International with the express desire to inject «an anti-imperialist spirit» into it). However, above all, the «great absentee» was then the fledgling Soviet trade union movement. In order to affiliate the Soviets were required to recognize the principles already determined in Amsterdam without their participation. They could not affiliate as statements «repudiating the Bolchevik» regime had already been adopted which they found unacceptable.

Shortly afterwards, in 1920, the «*International Federa-*

*tion of Christian Trade Unions*» (IFCTU) was founded in The Hague, the concept of which, inspired by the papal circular «*Rerum Novarum*», rejected the class struggle as «contrary to Christian belief».

Class trends, influenced by the Russian Revolution and excluded from the policy-making of the IFTU, met in Moscow in 1920 and formed the «*International Council of Trade Unions*» which, in 1921, became the «*Red International of Labour Unions*» (RILU).

Let us further add the anarcho-syndicalist trend which, although already weak, was still present and internationally organized under the same name as the First International, i.e. «*International Working Men's Association*»; which officially existed until the late twenties. In this way, the international trade union movement went into the post-war era divided, due to internal and external factors. This inevitably weakened the movement in any united attempt at tackling the serious problems looming ahead.

Practically right up to the outbreak of World War II, the international organizations continued to be separated by radical political differences, they hardly maintained any mutual relations and were beleaguered by sectarianism and rancour. This division suited the forces which were preparing a new world disaster...

#### ONCE AGAIN, THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

The division within the trade union movement was in frank contradiction to the needs of the workers' struggle. Illusions surrounding social reform and economic prosperity after the war in the capitalist countries were shattered in the inevitable cogs of the system. The great crisis in 1929-1930 shook the labour world. Reactionary forces in Europe responded to the upsurge in workers' struggles with a new phenomena, fascism. This, in the labour sector, meant vio-



24 lent suppression of trade union rights and workers were forced to assemble in organizations controlled by the regime and obliged to carry out, with all its consequences, a policy of class collaboration (Mussolini announced in February 1928: "I declare that as of now, capital and labour will have the same rights and duties, as brothers within the fascist family").

Yet fascism, adopted by the most aggressive forces of imperialism, placed the peace and the security of all nations in serious danger. The unity of the working class, a factor which mobilized the masses in defence of democracy, peace and national independence, became an even more pressing need, at a time when the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America intensified their struggle for liberation from the colonial yoke and other forms of dependence, chiefly economic.

As early as 1924, the leadership of the Red International of Labour Unions suggested to the International Federation of Trade Unions that both organizations merge through a congress of unity with proportional representation, however the idea was rejected by the General Council of the IFTU.

The Amsterdam centre merely agreed to consider the possible affiliation of Soviet trade unions individually, in other words, it refused to recognize the RILU as an official body in other countries. Nevertheless, on a bilateral level, an «Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee» was created, although it was short-lived, it established its goal: to unite the international trade union movement.

The trade union movement in many lesser industrialized countries continued to expand for many years. However, the RILU was practically the only international centre to maintain contacts and inherent links with the trade unions in under-developed and dependent countries; it can even be said that this was one of its main merits. However, at the same time, a large number of autonomous trade unions were developing without international affiliation, who then played a significant role in the reconstruction of unity. In this

context, serious attempts were made towards unity on a regional scale: the «Confederation of Latin American Workers» (CTAL) was founded in 1938 in Mexico, as a united organization without international affiliation; to facilitate unity the «Latin American Trade Union Confederation» (CSLA), set up in 1932 as a RILU regional organization, ceased to exist.

The 1930s saw serious threats to the future of mankind. In Germany, fascism triumphed. In Spain, reactionary forces rose up against the Republic with the support of Hitler and Mussolini, to which the Western powers turned a blind eye. Italy seized Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Hitler's expansionism finished with the independence of Austria and then Czechoslovakia with the support of the signatories of the Munich Treaty ... This was the run up to the Second World War.

Between 1935 and 1936, the RILU ceased to exist. The IFTU, for its part, which had moved its headquarters to Berlin, was forced to disband in 1934 after the dissolution of the German trade unions and set up work again in London. In 1937, a new attempt towards unity occurred with the conclusion, in Moscow, of an agreement between a delegation from the IFTU and the Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions; however, the terms of the agreement were not ratified by the General Council of the International which met in August 1938. Neither did the Zurich Congress of the IFTU meeting in 1939 manage to alter the situation which was already bordering on war.

The path towards unity had to be sought outside international trade union structures as they existed then on the basis of the lessons learned from war and the anti-fascist struggle. Many years passed until representatives of the trade union movement throughout the whole world met in London, in the very same country where trade unionism was born, to discuss the future of trade unionism and the creation of a single trade union centre.



## 1945: Hope

*"I want to believe that the experience of the two terrible wars and that of the political and economic crisis of the period between the two wars has opened our eyes and that we desire no longer that bellicose and reactionary forces shall exploit our differences and our disunity."*

(From the welcoming address by Léon Jouhaux, on behalf of the French CGT, at the World Trade Union Conference, Paris, September 25th, 1945.)

The Second World War was the most destructive war ever. 50 million people died, both soldiers and civilians, 90 million people were injured — 28 million for life; the statistics of that time talk of 21 million homes destroyed but the figure is now believed to be much greater; untold damage was wrought on the economy, whole industries were wrecked, arable land was converted into battle fields, men were sent off to the front leaving behind a shortage of labour, the war industry took precedence over all others ... The flames engulfed the whole world. Europe and Asia bore the main brunt of the war, but all nations were affected in one way or another.

This mass slaughter was due to fascism, a reactionary and dictatorial ideology of monopoly capital, with social oppression and imperial expansion at their most aggressive.

The most brutal expression of fascism was German nazism, Mussolini's original brand of fascism and Japanese mili-

tarism, although fascism did, and still does, take on many forms: the common denominator being the instigation of the counter-revolutionary response of capital to the crisis and its incapacity to deal with the class struggle through the traditional arteries of bourgeois democracy.

The Nazi war crimes can never be erased from the minds of the peoples: genocide, concentration camps, torture and death chambers, crematoria, whole villages razed to the ground, the terror and slavery inflicted on occupied peoples but also the repression and murder of the best sons and daughters of the German people.

The mobilization of democratic forces was not sufficient to prevent the war. Account must be taken of the complicity of the Western powers who thought they could divert the course of the war to the East, towards their most hated class enemy — the Soviet Union: the Treaty of Munich, which tore Czechoslovakia to pieces was the most shining example of this and in June 1944, the Western front was opened, leaving the socialist state to bear the main brunt of the fighting for three years. The division of the trade union movement at the outbreak of the war became a lesson to be drawn upon during the period of reconstruction after the victory.

With the German attack on the USSR in June 1941, the war took on a different content. The heroic Red Army fighters were not only defending their fatherland against a ruthless aggressor but were staunchly defending the social gains won through the socialist revolution. We could take the moving example of the Soviet Kolkhoz peasants who, upon abandoning their fields in the face of advancing invading troops, buried the title-deeds of their land issued by the Soviet powers, so that they could retrieve them after the liberation, they were not concerned with money, the legal cornerstone of their emancipation was their most treasured possession.

There is no disputing the valuable contribution of all states and peoples who fought to defeat the common enemy: fascism. However, there is no doubt that the Soviet Union



28 made the greatest sacrifice — 20 million dead — in the overall resistance to nazi-fascist expansionism. After forcing back the invader, Soviet troops proceeded to liberate much of Europe and to raise the flag of freedom in Berlin itself, which considerably augmented the international prestige of the Soviet State and helped break down anti-communist prejudice — one of the most refined forms of division.

The war became a head-on clash against the forces of obscurantism and oppression, represented by nazi-fascism. A broad front of democratic forces grouped together governments of different political persuasion, resistance movements in the occupied countries, and patriots of all nationalities in a veritable international epic. The agreements of the Teheran, Jalta and Potsdam conferences proved that cooperation between states of different social systems was possible and beneficial to all mankind.

The 1945 victory brought fresh hopes for all mankind. People swore never to endure war nor oppression again. On June 26, 1945, in San Francisco, they officially declared:

*We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small and to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security, and to ensure, by the acceptance of principles and the institution of methods, that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest, and to employ international machinery for the promotion of the*

*solved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims."*(\*) 29

Workers and their trade union organizations played a decisive part in the creation of this broad alliance and the subsequent sharpening of their social objectives. Unity was cemented at the very height of the anti-fascist struggle.

#### SOWING THE SEEDS OF WORLD TRADE UNION UNITY

When we interrupted our narrative in Chapter I, we left the international trade union movement at a disadvantage, faced with the tremendous tasks awaiting it. Proposals for unity, advanced by the Soviet trade unions, the spokesmen of the former RILU, were rejected. An «Emergency Committee», set up by the IFTU when war broke out, merely carried out its pledge to wait and see how events progressed and officially continued to exist as an organization doomed to destruction by its own inaction.

Nevertheless, when prejudice was overcome, plunging life itself into a fierce anti-fascist battle, the need for unity rose to the fore. The national liberation struggles which accompanied the war, highlighted the role of trade union organizations in dependent countries, who could no longer be silenced on international trade union policy. When the IFTU fell apart it became clear that international structures were outmoded and that the world needed a new united organization, as a decisive means in order to preserve peace and to ensure social progress.

As in the past, bilateral cooperation was significant in this renewal. In October 1941, the *Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee* was set up once again, one of its many tasks,

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(\*) *From the Charter of the United Nations, Preamble.*



30 apart from helping the fighting anti-fascist forces, was to work towards a united post-war trade union movement.

Similarly, the *Franco-Soviet Trade Union Committee* put the spotlight on the heroic anti-fascist resistance in France and the trade union movement which was united around the CGT. The British TUC, in a bid to extend its cooperation with the Soviet trade unions and with the United States, clashed with the AFL which preferred to place all hopes on a revival of the ailing IFTU. At that time the «apolitical attitude» of Samuel Gompers in this old North American centre, had already given rise to virulent anti-communism openly practiced by the top-level trade unionists. A rival movement emerged in 1932 as a democratic alternative, with the foundation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Unlike the AFL, the CIO was more amenable to international trade union cooperation, but TUC efforts merely resulted in the creation of an *Anglo-American Trade Union Committee* in 1943, without the Soviets.

In Latin America, the CTAL (Latin American Workers' Confederation) had been stressing the need for world trade union unity since its foundation in 1938. When war broke out it adopted various resolutions calling for a «world workers' conference to lay the foundations for post-war reconstruction» in its first General Council in 1941 and in its Havana meeting in July 1943.

It was the British trade unions who took the lead. During their Annual Congress held in Southport (September 1943) the General Council was mandated to convene a world trade union conference which it did in November, for the following June (1944) in London.

The IFTU seemed to have faded from the limelight, but with the backing of the AFL it was in fact struggling to keep its head above water; its leaders took part in negotiations to convene a world trade union conference and tried to convince the entire trade union movement that the IFTU was the best means for such an initiative and harped back to their age-old concept that, if it opened up its ranks to other organ-

izations, especially to the Soviet trade unions, a new international organization would be futile.

The war and the landing of the British and American troops in Normandy (June 1944) prevented the Conference from being held as planned. In a bid to turn this to its advantage, the AFL proposed to hold the Conference in Philadelphia, but the Annual TUC Congress (Blackpool, October) decided to convene the Conference in London, for the beginning of 1945. A new fact, however, was the decision to form a *Preparatory Committee* comprising the British TUC, the CIO of the United States and the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions (USSR), giving the preparations international dimensions. For the first time ever, the Soviet trade unions officially took part in rebuilding the international trade union movement on broader foundations and, in so doing, shattered an over 20-year old blockade.

The IFTU made a last-ditch attempt at survival and convened its General Council on the same day and pressured the Conference into changing the original agenda, «to see if it is possible to create an international organization comprising all trade unions» (\*).

But no one could prevent the Conference from taking place.

## THE LONDON CONFERENCE

The canons of the Second World War were still blazing when the historic World Trade Union Conference met at County Hall, London, from February 6-17, 1945. It was attended by 204 delegates from 53 national and international organizations representing 60 million workers worldwide.

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(\*) Quoted by J.F. Michel in «La création de la FSM», *Cahiers d'histoire* No. 15, Paris 1983.

32 Greetings were sent to the Conference from the Heads of Government of the United States, Great Britain and the USSR meeting in Yalta. King George VI of England received the presidium at Buckingham Palace. It was the most important trade union event yet to be seen. The main historic outcome was that the foundations were now laid for the reunification of the world trade union movement.

The Chair was assumed by three co-chairmen from the TUC, the CIO and the AUCCTU — the members of the preparatory committee, assisted by three vice-chairmen from the CGT of France, the Chinese Federation of Labour and the Confederation of Workers in Latin America, Sir Walter Citrine, General Secretary of the TUC, was appointed General Secretary of the Conference.

Discussions revolved around two main tasks: the war and prospects for post-war development and world trade union unity. This last matter gave rise to heated debates reflecting the different opinions of the organizations present. Under these new circumstances, the IFTU leadership was still fighting for survival and this fight was reflected in the clash of two opposing positions — keep the IFTU going, and strengthen it or create a new world trade union centre. Most delegates endorsed the second option; however, the desire for the broadest possible unity was expressed by the decision to include IFTU and ITS representatives in the *Committee of the World Trade Union Conference*, set up to implement the conclusions of the Conference; namely to convene another conference in Paris to create a new world organization which, even at that time, was to be called the *World Federation of Trade Unions* and to draft a Constitution.

An *Administrative Committee* was set up comprising the TUC, CGT, the AUCCTU, the CIO, the CTAL, the IFTU and one ITS representative. A *sub-committee*, of limited leadership comprised: Sir Walter Citrine (Great Britain), M.P. Tarasov (USSR), Sidney Hillman (USA), Louis Sallant (France), V. Lombardo (CTAL), W. Schevenels (General Secretary of the IFTU) and H.T. Liou (China). Mean-

while what had happened to the former International Federation of Christian Trade Unions (IFCTU)?

Just like the IFTU, the IFCTU had fallen into lethargy during the war only to recuperate when the movement towards unity began to gain momentum. A representative of the IFCTU attended the Conference as an observer and a post as observer was retained for him on the Committee.

The Conference adopted a *«Manifesto to the Workers and Peoples of the World»*, which outlined the objectives of this new world centre which was to be “without exclusions and everyone was to be on equal footing”.

The Committee then met in April in Washington and sent a delegation to the United Nations Conference in San Francisco.

Discussions over the foundation of the WFTU continued after the Conference and hinged essentially on the new Constitution. Opinions originally expressed in London were to mark these discussions too: some people felt that unity was no longer so necessary after the war and that unity would be dubious in peacetime. Complex negotiations surrounded the fate of the former IFTU, the ITSs and the IFCTU upon how they were to be incorporated into the new WFTU. The marked absence of the AFL in these attempts for re-unification and its keenness to revive the IFTU had a considerable bearing on negotiations; some people thought that the creation of the WFTU would be a little «premature» and objected to the idea of holding the 2nd Conference in Paris.

Nevertheless, these were only slight hitches due to the overriding desire to transform the alliance, forged during the war, into a long-lasting instrument of international unity and solidarity. As agreed in London, the World Trade Union Conference was finally convened for September, in Paris. Its main objective was to set up the WFTU with the adoption of its Constitution.



On September 25th, 1945, the World Trade Union Conference re-opened its doors, this time in the Palais de Chailot in Paris, to 67 million workers from 54 countries, represented by 64 national organizations and 20 international organizations — the IFTU, the IFCTU, the CTAL and 17 ITSs.

Debates centred around the draft Constitution submitted by the Administrative Committee; in his introductory report, Louis Saillant stressed that the draft was based on "conciliation formulae" to express the "general trends". Following a general discussion on this item, the Conference elected a Commission to study the amendments proposed by delegates. Meanwhile, the plenary session continued with a report by S. Hillman on participation in the recently created United Nations Organization.

The new draft paid considerable attention to the remarks of the organizations present. After in-depth discussion, the chairman, Léon Jouhaux, submitted the whole text for approval; this was during the afternoon session on the 3rd October. The Minutes of the Conference record that although the procedure was only to rise, the delegates rose and then broke into a standing ovation: *the WFTU was born*.

With the completion of its historical mission, the Conference ended. The Credentials Committee was charged to extend the delegates' cards to the *First World Trade Union Congress*.

The different stages in these discussions revealed, however, the different co-existent trends which had already been brought to the fore during preparatory work for the Conference and which, however, were not an obstacle to achieving unity. (The quotations that follow are taken from the Minutes of the World Trade Union Conference, Paris, 1945.)

Sir Walter Citrine, speaking on behalf of the TUC, raised doubts over the representative nature of certain delegates,

called for a «transition period» to allow time for certain facets of the future running of the organization to materialize and embarked on negotiations with the IFTU leadership concerning the involvement of IFTU staff in the WFTU. He warned of the dangers of excessive «politisation» and invoking financial reasons, even opposed the proposal to base the WFTU in Paris.

M. Oldenbroek, General Secretary of the International Transport Federation and future General Secretary of the ICFTU, had already voiced his opposition to the draft Constitution in the Administrative Committee (of which he was a member), opposition which mainly concerned the proposal to integrate the ITSs as «Industrial Departments», as stipulated by Article 13.

Walter Schevenels, IFTU General Secretary, complained bitterly about the criticisms of the IFTU, which he compared with the ILO and tried to justify with an argument based on subordination to government policy: "How could the IFTU have obtained a different attitude from the governments than that which national bodies themselves obtained from their own governments?"

J. Brodier, on behalf of the IFCTU, said that the Christian trade unions would only affiliate to the WFTU if they were permitted to maintain their own structure as an independent organized trend.

Most important of all is that the vast majority of delegates were staunchly behind the workers of the world, who, enlightened by the war, wanted a genuine class-based, democratic and universal world organization as an effective means of carrying out their struggles.

Giuseppe Di Vittorio spoke on behalf of the democratic Italian trade unions which had recently rejoined the Italian General Confederation of Labour (CGIL):

*"It is essential that we should establish an international organization with sufficient force and sufficient vigour to take an active part in the establishment of a true and lasting*

*peace, for without the active participation of the organized working class we cannot establish a real peace and we cannot precede that by the complete destruction of fascism in all its forms."*

The increasing weight of the unions in the dependent, colonial and semi-colonial countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America was a sign of the times. Their active participation was the driving force behind debates. As an example, we quote from three revealing speeches:

*"Each one of us joins the International for certain specific aims — the common international aims of the working class and also to achieve a particular national aim of the countries to which the working class belongs."*

S.A. Dange (India)

*"The hopes of the workers in my country are centred in the coming World Federation of Trade Unions and they hope and trust that it will hold high the flag of the struggle for peace and the fight against all reactionaries — the fight for the economic development of our various countries and for freedom and progress for all colonial territories and the countries of Latin America."*

Lazaro Pena (Cuba)

*"The root cause of war in the final analysis lies in economics and I want to remind this Conference of the indivisible nature of labour. Labour in the white skin cannot have any progress whilst labour in the coloured skin is enslaved in the colonial territories."*

S.G. Annan (Gold Coast)

The age-old aspirations of workers worldwide were ful-

filled with the foundation of the WFTU on this historic 3rd October 1945 in Paris. Aspirations for a united international class-based organization, open to all, regardless of race, nationality, religion, philosophy or politics, social system or level of development of the respective countries. All previous efforts and lessons learnt the hard way materialized with the foundation of the WFTU.

The Constitution approved, the sessions continued with the First World Trade Union Congress which lasted until October 8th. A series of resolutions were adopted, the first to emanate from the young world trade union centre, and the new leadership was elected.

The WFTU was headed by *Sir Walter Citrine*, President, and *Louis Saillant*, General Secretary. The Vice-Presidents and members of the Executive Bureau were elected as follows: *V. V. Kuznetsov* (USSR), *S. Hillman* (USA), *L. Jouhaux* (France), *V. Lombardo Toledano* (Mexico), *M. F. Chu* (China), *G. Di Vittorio* (Italy) and *E. Kupers* (Netherlands), *J. Brophy* (USA), *M. Falin* (USSR), and *W. Schevenels* (Belgium) were appointed deputy secretaries. The composition of the Executive Bureau shows that, over and above differences, the common desire for unity prevailed. This was undoubtedly the greatest contribution to the history of the trade union movement.

#### THE HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARIS CONFERENCE — CONGRESS

The IFTU's last official event was its dissolution, as decided by its General Council in December the same year. The IFCTU upheld the reservations expressed by its delegate in Paris and remained aloof from the reunification process. The ITSs, although officially part of the new WFTU, were questioning the way in which they were to organize a final merger. But the most fervent opponent of the WFTU



was still the AFL, stubbornly conditioning its international relations to ideological considerations.

Apart from these exceptions, for the first time ever, the WFTU comprised virtually the entire world trade union movement. Within its ranks were to be found trade unions from developed capitalist countries, the Soviet Union, fledgling peoples' democracies and from under-developed and dependent countries. It was not an inoperative and shapeless body, «Unity for Unity's Sake» but was imbued with a clear class basis, established after lengthy discussions.

Obviously, the founders of the WFTU were not all of the same political hue; as we have seen they even held quite different opinions on trade union work and they clashed on many occasions when defining specific aspects of the organization they wanted to create. Nevertheless, they managed to agree and to draw up a common platform which although not engulfing *all* the wishes of each party, was, at the same time, something much more important; as it was *common to all* this made the process of dealing with workers' aspirations that more expedient in their struggle for their aims and objectives which, as set forth in the Foreward of the Constitution adopted in Paris could,

*“only be fully attained by the establishment of a World Order in which all the resources of the world will be utilized for the benefit of all its peoples, the vast majority of whom are workers by hand and brain whose protection and whose progress depend upon the union of all their organized forces nationally and internationally.”*



## A path riddled with obstacles (1945-1949)

During its first four years, the WFTU fulfilled the dreams of the workers and created one sole united trade union centre. Nothing could detract from this historic event — not the absence of the AFL, nor the existence of the IFCTU as an independent international organization, nor altercations with the ITS leadership.

The fledgling organization did, however, have many obstacles to surmount.

The period between 1945-49 was a time of turbulence as the people and workers struggled to convert the great hopes of 1945 into reality, but were faced with the staunch resistance to change by reactionary and imperialist forces.

It is not astonishing that the differences which existed when the WFTU was founded were not easy to iron out, in fact they were to become sharper in the years to come. Nevertheless, the trade union movement was in a position to overcome them through democratic discussions. External factors were basically behind these differences with the in-

40 interference of the enemies of the working class, who brought about the division which today separates the trade union movement into different trends.

### FIRST STEPS

October 1945. The delegates of the First World Trade Union Congress returned to their respective countries and the Secretariat of the burgeoning World Federation of Trade Unions set up in Paris. It was during this period that we began to implement the guidelines determined by the Congress.

In actual fact, this was a fascinating task. Beginning with the enormous proportions assumed by the world trade union movement: the Paris Congress represented 65 million workers from 52 countries on all five continents, however new organizations were requesting affiliation and many more were being set up with the solidarity of this world organization. In Asia, the following organizations were founded in June 1945, the All-Burmese Trade Union Congress, in August the same year, the All-Korean Federation of Labour, in 1946, the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions in April, the Congress of Labour Organizations of Philippines in May, the General Confederation of Labour of Vietnam and, in December, the All-Indonesian Centre of Trade Unions (SOBSI).

In Africa, in 1946, the Egyptian Trade Union Congress was founded so were the Trade Union of Workers of Tunisia, the General Confederation of Trade Unions of Morocco, the Congress of Trade Unions of Nigeria, the Council of Non-European Trade Unions of the Transvaal, the Trade Unions of the Gold Coast (Ghana) and other territories still under colonial rule.

A far cry from the times when the international trade union movement was purely restricted to industrialized countries. Organizing workers in all corners of the world, helping

them to create their own trade unions and then promoting development without any type of interference was one of the central concerns of the WFTU. Following the guidelines of the World Trade Union Conference, since the very beginning the WFTU has devoted its efforts to promoting solidarity with the just struggles of the workers and peoples for national liberation and forging the trade union movement in developing countries and still continues to do so today.

On January 1st, 1947, the WFTU had already registered a total of 71 member organizations which represented around 70 million workers.

After the war, the world was faced with the task of eliminating the traces of fascism, destroying any leftovers and fostering the democratic rebuilding of countries which formed the fascist block.

On the basis of the decisions taken in the London and Paris Conferences respectively, the WFTU developed an intense solidarity campaign with anti-fascist forces in Spain and Greece and managed to convince the United Nations to recommend to member-states the withdrawal of their ambassadors and plenipotentiary ministers from Madrid. The defence of trade union rights was at the heart of the solidarity actions with workers who were victims of repression, including workers in colonial territories. On two occasions, July 1946 and February 1947, special missions were sent to Iran when trade unionists were arrested and when political intervention in peaceful demonstrations was detected. A similar mission was sent, in March 1947, to South Africa, following brutal repression of miners on strike.

A question of particular importance in the solidarity activities of that time was the WFTU's contribution to the task of ridding Germany of nazism and de-militarizing Japan which took the form of creating democratic trade unions in both countries. A special commission was set up, led by the General Secretary Louis Saillant, who visited Germany on two occasions and submitted recommendations to the Four Powers. Democratic trade unions were created in the var-



42 ious zones of occupation and the WFTU hoped to merge them into one single national centre; in February 1948, the Inter-Zonal Conference decided on the creation of a General Council of German Trade Unions but the entire process was interrupted by the cold war and the subsequent division of Germany.

Finally, following the clear mandate of the Paris Congress, the trade union movement had managed to gain a voice in the newly created UN international bodies. It was precisely on the WFTU's initiative and insistence that the United Nations decided to introduce consultative status for non-governmental organizations in the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Nevertheless, right from the start the WFTU was not in an easy position in the ECOSOC as the AFL also had the same status — thus trade union division became institutionalized. The ILO Convention No. 87, 1947, an important tool for workers in their fight for trade union rights, was based on a draft submitted by the WFTU.

These few examples confirm the value of unity and the decision to create a strong world organization.

Amidst the complex post-war situation, the trust which millions of workers around the world had in the WFTU was not proved ill-placed.

#### FROM ALLIANCE TO CONFRONTATION

The victory over fascism in 1945, a result of the broadest possible alliance of democratic forces ever known in history, in which a decisive role was played by the Soviet Union, opened up new horizons for the peoples in their struggle for national liberation and social progress. The desire to eliminate, once and for all, the scourge of war — was embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and became the driving force behind the right to fight the cause of wars, a fight which could only be successful through radical social change. Im-

perialist exploitation and domination were to be eliminated from human relations, as became clear after the most important lesson learned in the two devastating wars suffered by humanity that century.

Within the new correlation of forces, the sphere of action of imperialism had been considerably curbed.

Under different circumstances, various countries in Europe and Asia opted for the socialist path of development; the socialist mode of production was no longer exclusive to one country and was, in practice, revealing its advantages. Ancient China woke up and the revolution put an end to the corrupt regime of Kuomintang to proclaim the People's Republic in 1949. The peoples in Indochina rose up against French domination. Former colonial empires were breaking up; in 1946, Syria was liberated, in 1947, India was released from colonialism; colonialism was no longer a privilege which was more or less acceptable to the powerful, instead it became an anachronism to be wiped out; the right to self-determination became an internationally recognized legal principle.

In developed capitalist countries there was an upsurge in the workers' struggles for better living and working conditions, for the reconstruction of the war-torn economy to the benefit of the working masses.

The response of the reaction headed by imperialism, to this changing world, was the breakdown of the anti-fascist alliance and the onslaught of the *«cold war»*.

The United States emerged from the war ready to assume hegemony over the world. Their powerful monopolies, richer thanks to the losses inflicted on the European powers during the war, bowled over their competitors and concentrated their domination on other regions, particularly in Latin America which, since Monroe, has been considered as the *«backyard»* for Yankee expansion. With the Bretton Woods agreements they imposed worldwide supremacy of the dollar and achieved a leading role in the world capitalist financial system. At the same time, they needed to ensure their

44 political stronghold for which they sought military supremacy, in particular the monopoly over atomic weapons, which they conserved until 1950.

In 1947, with the «*Truman Doctrine*» the main capitalist power proclaimed itself something of a «world policeman», assuming the right to intervene against any government in the world which was not quite to its liking. At the same time, General Marshall presented the United States Congress with his plan for the «reconstruction» of Europe, later called the Marshall Plan. In Fulton, the former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called for the dissolution of the war alliance and the creation of a Western block against the socialist states.

At the beginning of 1948, imperialism, with internal reactionary forces, attempted to strike a powerful blow to Czechoslovakia to divert the course of social change. Nevertheless, the masses turned out to be decisive, a fact which was not alien to this new period. The mobilization of the workers and the general strike called by the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement (ROH), the only centre, help to find a solution to the crisis of February 25th as it imposed the continuity of the socialist option and released the government from reactionary forces.

The same year, in violation of UN resolutions, imperialist plots against the Palestinians and other Arab peoples sparked off the first conflict in the Middle East, the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland and the denial of self-determination and the right to set up their own national state.

The Western powers, one by one, decided to break the agreements drawn up in Yalta and Potsdam which were the foundations of international cooperation for peace. The Western Alliance replaced the alliance of democratic forces for which many soldiers from these countries gave their lives during the Second World War.

In 1949, imperialist circles managed to divide Germany with the unilateral proclamation of the Federal Republic in

the West, in an attempt to revive German imperialism along its 1937 borders. Shortly afterwards, the German Democratic Republic was founded in the East as the first peaceful German State of Workers. The southern part of Korea, occupied by the US, became an appendix of US expansionism in Asia. That same year saw the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance headed by the US with blatant aggressive arms. The Warsaw Treaty, signed six years later, was purely a matter of legitimate defence for the socialist countries.

Once again, imperialism threatened world peace, embarking on a policy of confrontation in international relations.

Would the trade union movement be able to stand up to such a test?

#### THE FIRST HURDLES

Activities surrounding the rebuilding of the German democratic trade union movement between 1946 and 1947 were showing the first signs of the difficulties clashing with ideas for unity. Indeed, the recommendations of the WFTU Commission of Inquiry were only implemented by the authorities in the zone of Soviet occupation; and the Western powers did not merely ignore the WFTU's request to establish a Liaison Office in Berlin but actually authorized the AFL to set up their own office there.

The Trade Union Secretariats in the three Western zones turned a blind eye to the decisions of the Inter-Zonal Conference in 1948 and broke off relations with the Free Trade Unions of Germany (FDGB) created in the Eastern zone; at the same time the Secretariats of the British and United States zone merged.

The Council of Free Trade Unions of Greater Berlin, a body which up until then was united, split and created the



46 so-called Independent Trade Union Opposition with the public backing of the British TUC, affiliated to the WFTU.

In Japan, during the same period, the United States occupation authorities placed serious obstacles in the path of a WFTU inquiry and prevented Japanese delegates from participating in any WFTU meeting.

In Greece, following the dissolution of the General Confederation of Labour in July 1946, the assassination of its General Secretary M. Paparigas, and the arrest of other leaders and their confinement to concentration camps, certain sectors of the trade union movement did not hesitate to support the trade union centre set up by forces aligned with the monarchical fascist regime.

In 1946, the AFL, opposed to the WFTU right from the start, set up a European Representation Office in Brussels, and placed Irving Brown as director; Irving Brown had been in Europe since the end of 1945 on behalf of the Free Trade Union Committee, FTUC, predecessor of the notoriously famous American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD) which was financed by large US consortiums and was one of the largest post-war operations of the recently created Central Intelligence Agency (CIA):

Thomas W. Braden, Director of the section of international organizations of the CIA between 1950 and 1954, wrote in 1967 for the Saturday Evening Post:

*«...In 1947, the communist CGT staged a strike in Paris which threatened to bring the French economy to a standstill. It was feared that the government would fall... In the midst of this crisis Irving Brown appeared. With funds from the Dubinsky trade union (AFL — Ed.) the «Force Ouvrière» was organized as a non-communist trade union. When the money ran out, he turned to the CIA. Thus, the secret subsidies to free trade unionism began... without which post-war history could have followed a very different path ...(\*)».*

(\*) Quoted by Winslow Peck in «The AFL—CIA».

In November 1947, the «Force Ouvrière» fraction broke off from the CGT and various delegates from organizations affiliated to the WFTU, including the Deputy General Secretary W. Schevenels, participated in its Constitutive Congress. When explanations were demanded during the Executive Committee of the WFTU held in Rome in May 1948, he declared that he had attended “purely in his personal capacity”, and that the FO matched his “concept of trade unionism”.

In Latin America, pressure was directed on breaking the unity of the trade union movement grouped within the Confederation of Workers of Latin America (CTAL). Traditionally, the hegemonistic policy of US imperialism was evident in Latin America through US Pan-American concept based on the illusionary community of interests between the Northern giant and the Latin American peoples. In 1918, the AFL attempted, without much success, to set up an All-American Workers' Confederation under its own auspices. After the Second World War, the AFL once again took the initiative to set up, in 1948, the Inter-American Confederation of Labour (IACL), this time in Lima, as a rival organization to the Confederation of Workers of Latin America. Vast sums of money were then pumped into dividing the movement on the basis of the concept of the «cold war». When in 1951 the Workers' Inter-American Congress of Free Trade Unions met in Mexico to give birth to the regional organization of the ICFTU, the ORIT, the US delegate openly declared that efforts to change the mentalities of Latin American workers had already cost 175 million dollars (!)(\*)

Serious differences emerged concerning the role of the ITSs, which outlived the IFTU and were opposed, as we have seen, to the setting up of «trade branches» within the WFTU, as set forth in the constitution adopted in Paris. These differences were exploited to the full to undermine,

(\*) Quoted by V. Lombardo Toledano.



48 from the inside, the unity of the trade union movement. Talks with ITS leaders were long and drawn out, in fact the ITSs were used as a means of attacking the WFTU.

In April 1948, the Oslo Congress of the International Transport Federation, the ITF, even called for the creation of a «Free Trade Union International» as the AFL had been suggesting for at least a year previously: as can be seen, differences were already coming towards a breakdown.

In 1947, during the General Council meeting in Prague, life within the WFTU was still progressing normally. Arthur Deakin of the TUC replaced Sir Walter Citrine as president on his retirement from the trade union movement. James B. Carey of the CIO took over from Sidney Hillman who died shortly before.

From 1948 onwards, however, differences of opinion became sharper as could be seen in debates in statutory meetings. Certain tasks which had already been agreed upon such as holding an Asian Trade Union Conference or implementing the decisions of an African trade union meeting in Dakar, were impeded due to British and US opposition. Basically, what was at stake again, was the question of support for the national liberation struggles of the dependent countries as a first display of international solidarity, as decided in Paris. If this principle had been abandoned, the very essence of the world organization would have been lost.

Internal debates, quite normal in all democratic organizations, could be centred around the preparations for the Second World Trade Union Congress, planned for 1949. But the crisis broke out beforehand and not by pure chance.

#### A HURRIED CHAIN OF EVENTS

The controversy surrounding the Marshall Plan is usually blamed for the 1949 split. Nevertheless, as we have seen, basic differences over a range of questions were emerging within the WFTU even before the famous general-turned-



Inside a typical factory in the 19th century.

Haymarket Square, Chicago, 3.5.1886





The attack on the Winter Palace in Petersburg 7. 11. 1917.



The great 1929-1930 crisis which sharpened the trauma of unemployment.

Fascism. Mortal danger for the freedom of the peoples.

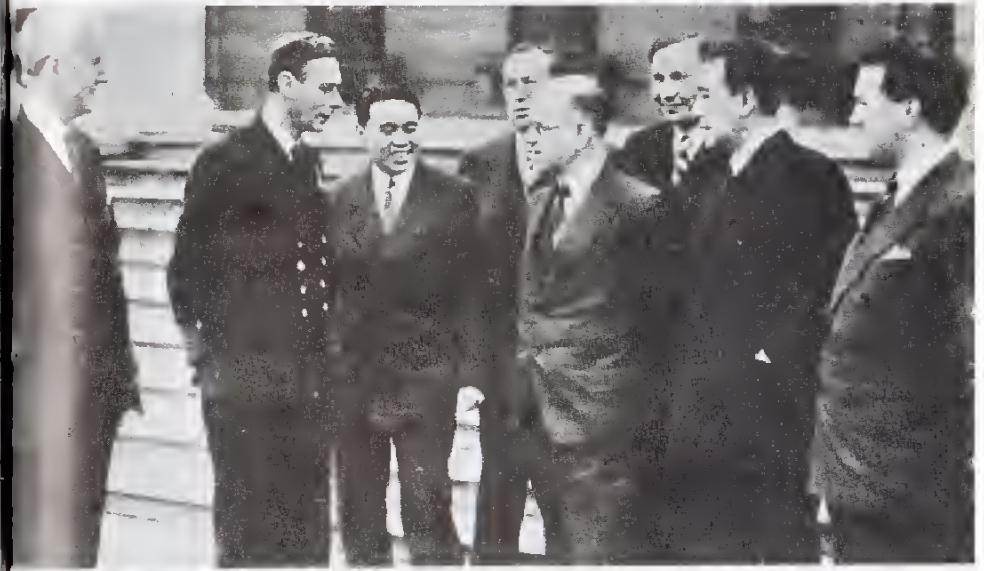




The 2nd World War was the most destructive war ever seen by humanity



The World Trade Union Conference in London, February 1945.

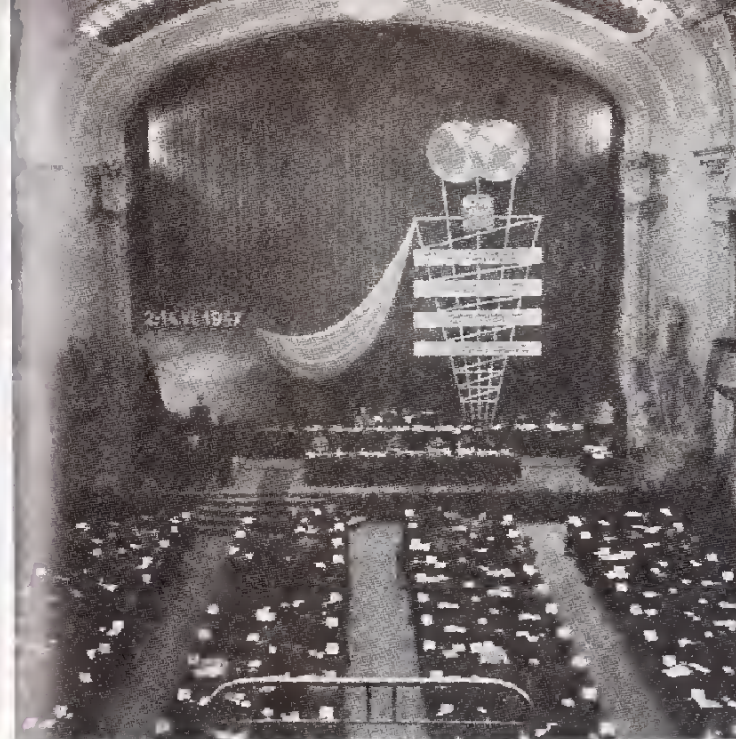


King George VI of England receives the presidium of the Conference in Buckingham Palace.



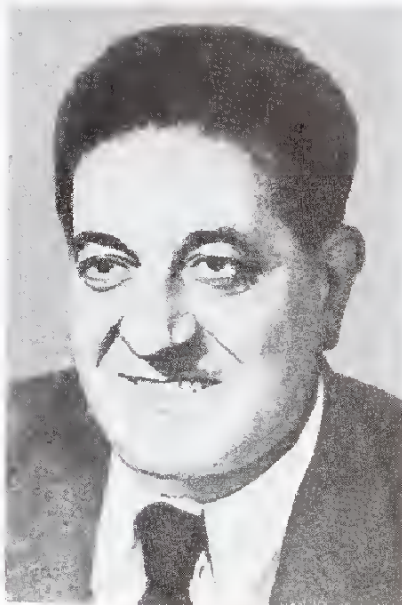


The birth of the WFTU at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris, October 3rd, 1945.



General Council Session, Prague, 1947.

The 2nd World Trade Union Congress opens in Milan, 1949.



Giuseppe Di Vittorio,  
WFTU President  
from 1949 to 1957.



Louis Saillant,  
WFTU General Secretary  
from 1945 to 1969.  
Honorary President  
from 1969 to 1974.

politician came up with his capitalist reconstruction plan for Europe. In actual fact these differences alone would not have caused the split. The events in 1949 within the trade union movement should be placed against the background of the political aims of imperialism to which a united trade union movement was a hindrance. The example of the division in the French trade union movement illustrates the role played by the CIA's secret activities. Let us consider the facts.

The AFL and the TUC, to be joined shortly afterwards by the CIO, urged the trade union movement to actively support the proposals in the Programme for European Reconstruction which George C. Marshall, Secretary of State under Truman, was to make a great deal of noise in presenting to European governments in July 1947. Most WFTU members could not accept these proposals: conditions attached to loans infringed on the sovereignty of the countries concerned and the main aim was to ensure the domination of US capital whilst restoring the economic and military might of West Germany as a launching pad for a policy of confrontation against the socialist countries.

The proponents of trade union involvement in the plan met in London in March 1948. The sponsors of the meeting, chiefly the AFL, were not particularly perturbed by the absence of a large part of the European trade union movement. The meeting aimed to set up a Trade Union Consultative Committee as part of the US plan, which was officially set up in a second meeting in July.

Meanwhile, this matter figured on the agenda of the WFTU Executive Committee meeting in Rome (April/May). Although those in favour of the plan were in a clear minority, it was agreed, in a last-ditch attempt at unity and in accordance with the Constitution, to leave each member organization free to make up its own mind.

Consequently, this controversial question could well have finished there. However, subsequent events show that dif-



50 ferences on this point were being exploited to the point of rupture.

Imperialism wanted to impose the concept of a «free world», against an alleged «Soviet threat». This same dividing line was to slice up the trade union movement into the «free trade unions» and those who, for defending the class-based concept, were «Moscow's agents». Unfortunately, these ridiculous divisionary tactics based on the cold war were not ignored by some trade union sectors. In July 1948, during the ITF Oslo Congress, Arthur Deakin fervently denied the accusation that the WFTU (of which he was still president) was an «instrument of Soviet imperialism».

Ironically shortly afterwards, Arthur Deakin himself, at the WFTU Executive Bureau meeting in Paris (January 19, 1949) read out a letter from his national organization, the TUC, demanding «suspension of all WFTU activities for a period of 12 months», otherwise the British TUC would withdraw from the WFTU. This was a veritable ultimatum which, if accepted, would have meant the virtual dissolution of the WFTU. That was how James B. Carey understood this and hurriedly proceeded to read the «death act» of the world centre, quite clearly stating:

*“It is no use pretending that the WFTU is anything but a corpse. Let us bury it.” (\*)*

The motion was rejected as it did not fall within the jurisdiction of the Executive Bureau. The matter was referred to

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(\*) Today it could be surprising to see such a radical change of mind in former leaders, shortly after the vigorous unitarian speeches of the Paris World Trade Union Conference. The minutes of this note that J.B. Carey, as a delegate from the United States declared:

“I may say at the start that the CIO, in joining with other national labour organizations to found the World Federation of Trade Unions, has done so wholeheartedly”. Note that Léon Jouhaux, whose promising words which we chose to open chapter II, himself took charge of the splinter FO group in France.

the Executive Committee and to the Congress. The dissident group, however, was true to its words and Deakin and Carey, accompanied by E. Kupers, representing the Dutch trade unions, walked out of the meeting.

Soon afterwards, several organizations broke ties with the WFTU. The split was confirmed. In December that same year in London, the *International Confederation of Free Trade Unions* (ICFTU) was born. In April 1950 a suggestive remark was published in the US Industrial and Labor Relations Review:

*“It is rather too much to say that the ICFTU has been sponsored by the unions in the United States.” (\*)*

Nevertheless, James B. Carey's famous «epitaph» was mere wishful thinking, voiced too soon. The WFTU not only remained alive, but gave proof of its vitality in the 2nd World Trade Union Congress, held as planned despite the pressure, from June 29 to July 9, 1949, in Milan, Italy.

#### THE IDEA OF UNITY, STILL IN FORCE

From the point of view of size alone, the Milan Congress proved that, despite the endemic and complex crisis in 1949, the WFTU continued in its task of promoting workers' international solidarity: 43 countries were represented at the Congress, regrouping some 71,608,788 members.

However, debates during the Congress revealed that the overwhelming majority of trade unions in the world approved the policy of its leaders and, above all, rejected any attempt to «freeze» the activities of the WFTU. The Con-

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(\*) Quoted by William Z. Foster in «Outline history of the world trade union movement», New York, 1956.

52 gress regretted the absence of various organizations but was unanimous in defending the existence of the world centre and the need to enlarge it.

An «Open Letter» was adopted by the Congress and sent to workers and trade union activists in the United States, Great Britain and other countries whose centres had pulled out of the WFTU, urging them to find a way to reach an agreement around common aims.

So the efforts of the WFTU for united action, the tool of solidarity against this new background, date back to the very moment when unity was shattered.

The Congress' concern to strengthen the world organization was perfectly justified, since workers throughout the whole world had to face serious economic and social problems which highlighted the role of solidarity.

Vital tasks were awaiting the trade unions and internal problems were not to detract them from their essential aims. This was reflected in the documents adopted in Milan.

A general background document established the priorities in the struggle for peace, democratic rights of the peoples and international trade union unity. The social and economic demands of the workers were the object of a special resolution. Another resolution was devoted to the specific problems of migrant workers. Finally, a Manifesto was addressed to workers and trade unions around the world, urging them to struggle, united, to defend peace, democratic rights and the economic interests of the workers.

Activities on a branch or industrial level were also to be strengthened with the application of article 13 of the Constitution. This was how the decision to set up the Trade Unions Internationals (TUIs) came about, as WFTU industrial departments, which put an end to stale discussions with the leaders of the ITSs.

The newly elected leadership voiced the determination to continue efforts to realize the ideas of the Paris Congress:

*Giuseppe Di Vittorio* was elected President.

*Louis Saillant* was re-elected General Secretary.

Vice-Presidents were: *V. Kuznetsov* (USSR), *A. Le Leap* (France), *V. Lombardo Toledano* (Mexico), *Lui Chao Chih* (China), *B. Blokzil* (Netherlands), *F. Zupka* (Czechoslovakia), *S. A. Dange* (India), *L. Pena* (Cuba) and *A. Diallo* (Guinea). 53

To stress the determination for unity, two posts in the new Executive Bureau were reserved for representatives from the United States and Great Britain.

Endorsed by millions of workers throughout the world, the WFTU could continue its struggle.



## IV Faithful to the workers' cause (1949-1956)

*"Brothers, the session continues".* With these words G. Di Vittorio took over the presidency of the stormy session of the WFTU Executive Bureau of January 19, 1949, after the withdrawal of the dissident group. Shortly afterwards, the 2nd World Trade Union Congress heralded the continuity of the united organization created in 1945, in Paris, defeating those who wanted to see it dead and buried.

After the split which set the pattern for today's division of the world trade union movement, the WFTU became the sole world organization to work on an independent and universal class basis.

This historic task befell the WFTU at a particularly difficult period in international relations, as a result of the cold war unleashed by imperialist powers and the division of the trade union movement, one of its basic components.

Despite initial victory for this ferocious reactionary coun-

ter-attack, paid for primarily by the workers, these bellicose designs came up against the mounting resistance of the workers in their industrial actions with increasing national liberation struggles waged by the peoples and with the steadfast successes won by the workers in building a new society in the socialist world.

With this, the WFTU kept its banner of unity flying high, against all odds.

### CONSEQUENCES OF THE SPLIT

In the previous chapter we followed the events prior to the internal crisis in 1949 which put the seal on the whole strategy of breaking up the trade union ranks in various countries. The breakdown of relations between some organizations and the WFTU was a signal to generalize the division wherever possible. It has to be said that this was achieved through anti-democratic and unscrupulous means.

The process of division in Europe reached its peak in 1949. The DGB (Confederation of German Trade Unions) was set up in West Germany. The «Force Ouvrière» (FO) emerged in France and together with the longstanding CFTC (French Confederation of Christian Workers) were rivals to the united CGT. In Italy, the split within the IGIL was followed by the creation of the Italian Federation of Labour (FIL) which, in 1950, was to split into the Italian Union of Labour (UIL) and the Italian Confederation of Workers' Unions (CISL), both ICFTU affiliates.

Without delay, the ICFTU proposed to set up its own regional structures with the support of splinter groups in various countries: ERO in Europe, ARO in Asia, ORIT on the American continent. In many cases, the division amongst trade union ranks was imposed by methods bordering on the illegal and was accompanied by ruthless intervention from the authorities, repression and the murder of leaders.

A separate chapter is needed to detail the effects of the

56 split in the US trade union movement, under pressure of the anti-trade union policy of the Truman administration with the Taft-Hartley Law on Labour Disputes and the reactionary offensive of ideological persecution of the Senate Committee on Un-American Activities under its chairman McCarthy. During the CIO Convention in October 1949 in Cleveland, the witch hunt sealed its victory with the expulsion of many trade unionists and officers on ideological grounds. The results were seen straight away and the CIO one-time powerful organization, lost around 2 million members. Once the healthy trends within the US trade union movement had been forcibly stifled, the road was clear to merge the AFL and the CIO in 1956, under the leadership of George Meany.

The entire trade union movement became weaker as an immediate result of the division wherever bourgeois collaborators managed to impose themselves. Capitalist governments and management had a free rein to impose their monopoly policy. In countries with a dependent economy, the division in the trade union movement was used to step up repression of workers who were far from inclined to bow down to imperialist policies of implanting staunch military dictatorships and committing abominable crimes on behalf of the «free world». None of this was coincidental: division and repression are two sides of the same coin which is minted with a great deal of capital investment to facilitate domination of the exploiting classes.

Naturally, division could not have triumphed in many countries if it were not for the loop-holes which appeared with the trade union movement itself. United trends which set up the WFTU in 1945, were not strong enough to successfully confront such an all-out attack. But they were able to strengthen their own ranks and maintain the ideals of united working class despite all sorts of attacks, provocation and repression and converted the WFTU into a bastion of unity and solidarity, which was to gain prestige and authority daily amongst the workers throughout the whole world.

For this reason too, the WFTU incited the hatred of reactionary forces, who went all out to hamper or prevent its activities. Once division was achieved, the spokesmen of big business would have been even more jubilant if the world trade union centre had collapsed as planned.

Unfortunately, the French government of the time jumped on this international campaign bandwagon and expelled the WFTU in 1949. The headquarters of the WFTU, which since the very beginning had been in Paris, had to go — so moved to Vienna. However, as we shall see, difficulties did not cease even in neutral Austria.

#### THE «COLD WAR» AND ITS WARM VARIANTS

All these facts are not mere coincidences but are part of a global strategy of confrontation and aggression which was laid out by Harry Truman and his friends in 1947. This period is generally called the *cold war*, which seems to mean that only the non-use of weapons made it different from a conventional war. The other sides of the cold war were economic blockades, diplomatic aggression, propaganda attacks and persecution within opposing ranks, it was a real war, primarily directed against the socialist countries, but generally against any signs of independence or social progress.

The military aspect played an important part in the new relations between the United States and West European countries, due to the formation of the Western bloc against the socialist countries. To this end, the re-arming of West Germany was a source of ever greater danger to the security of peoples in Europe and to world peace.

This atmosphere of tension also sparked off localized conflicts and direct armed aggression against peoples, thus showing their real intentions.

One of the first serious events to occur was the Korean war which was started in 1950 by the South Korean regime against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and



58 which served as a pretext for large-scale US military intervention; until the armistice was signed in 1953, the Korean people were subjected to tremendous suffering, victims of the hatred and crimes perpetrated by the invading troops, but they resisted heroically, with the support of international solidarity. However, their desire for national reunification has still not been realized.

In 1954, the Vietnamese patriots struck a fatal blow to French colonialism in Dien Bien Phu and imposed recognition of Vietnam's independence at the Geneva Conference; but the US government did not accept such an agreement and occupied the southern part of the country, which gave rise to the difficult and long drawn out struggle of the Vietnamese people along with the peoples of Laos and Cambodia for national independence and progress which has marked admirable pages in history.

The same year, measures taken in view of the agrarian reform and nationalizations by the government of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala did not suit the taste of the United Fruit Company(\*) and the US State Department along with the CIA organized an invasion of mercenaries which was to defeat the popular government and implant the first in a series of bloody dictatorships which, since then, have wrought oppression on this Central American country.

In 1956, after the Egyptian government decided to nationalize the Suez Canal, troops from Britain, France and Israel joined together in a revenge attack which failed due to the unity and determination of the Egyptian people and international solidarity with their just cause.

The real objectives of the cold war were to stem the struggles of the workers and peoples and to prevent social progress. Whenever possible, the most aggressive circles of

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(\*) Today they are called United Brands, one of the main transnationals for bananas, African palms and other agricultural produce, brand name "Chiquita".

imperialism tried to push up the «temperature» of such confrontation, with their so-called «policy of brinkmanship», to coin the phrase used by the then US Secretary of State, John Foster-Dulles.

In 1950, on the initiative of certain prominent figures, the World Congress of peace supporters was held simultaneously in Paris and Prague, because the French government had refused visas to several delegates. *The World Peace Council*, created on this occasion with the active participation of the WFTU, became a broad body for the mobilization of public opinion for peace. Hundreds of millions of signatures were collected under the *Stockholm Appeal*, which called for a ban on atomic weapons.

The cold war was doomed to failure. The workers and other democratic sectors were becoming increasingly aware of the real class-political foundations of such a «war», which had nothing to do with freedom nor the defence of the «Western world».

#### THE ECONOMIC RESULTS OF THE MARSHALL PLAN AND THE WORKERS

Promises of economic prosperity under the capitalist development plan were at the heart of the propaganda offensive which was designed to bring workers' struggles for their demands to a standstill in developed capitalist countries. One part of the trade union movement even thought it opportune to mortgage unity in favour of this short-lived prosperity. What were the results of the Marshall Plan?

Concluded in 1952, the only real beneficiaries of this plan were capitalists who managed to recover from the war damage and the United States monopolies who ensured their dominant position in the capitalist world. Management, with more power and taking advantage of the division of the trade union movement, tried to force their own will on to millions of workers. The links of virtually all capitalist coun-

60 tries in Europe with US capital were tightened up, thus consolidating their alliance on a political and military level and following, to the letter the policy of the cold war and re-armament as dictated by Washington; NATO became a decisive vehicle for this aggressive policy and also served to further strengthen economic dependence. A key role within this strategy was played by West Germany which was fully involved in the economic, political and military plans of US imperialism.

The Marshall Plan did nothing to prevent the typical cycles of capitalist production and boom periods were followed by depression such as in 1953-54 when US industrial output fell by 11%. Each one brought with it bankruptcy for many companies and a greater concentration of capital.

It was then that the West European monopolies began to have their say, under the auspices of the Common Market. First of all, came the Schuman Plan to group together all coal and steel production which served as the launching pad for the *Treaty of Rome* in 1953 which, in turn, laid the foundations for the *European Economic Community*.

Of course, the workers could hardly accept this situation and so their industrial disputes rejected the fallacy of «social peace». In Italy, strikes for wage rises, against factory closures, for better social security cover and for agrarian reform gained considerable momentum; the public employees' strike on May 8, 1951, was followed by one million six hundred thousand workers and in 1953, the demand for wage rises was backed up by strikes in all factories in the large towns. In France, half a million metalworkers downed tools on February 22, 1950. In Great Britain, industrial action which began in November 1951 and lasted up until June 1952, won wage rises for 5 million workers. In the FRG, in August 1951, the first large strike since 1945 was staged by 120 thousand metalworkers in Hessen; in February 1952, they were joined by 60 thousand miners who went on strike in the Sarre area.

In general, one lesson emerged from the implementation

of the Marshall Plan: *capitalist monopolies have never searched for anything other than their own profits* and only the workers' struggle enables an improvement in living and working conditions.

#### THE SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

The period we are now dealing with was also one of consolidation and progress for the countries which had selected a socialist path of development in Europe and Asia. This was something of considerable historical significance: along with the Soviet Union, other countries emerged where power was in the hands of the workers, the roots of exploitation of man by man were eliminated and development was planned and carried out to the benefit of the entire society. The elimination of social ills such as unemployment along with the level attained by social security cover and the participation of workers in running the economy, the elimination of cyclical crisis and the accelerated pace of planned growth are elements which do not stand comparison with any capitalist country and are a form of incentive for the industrial actions of workers throughout the world. The constant solidarity of trade unions in socialist countries with their brothers and sisters throughout the world, along with the continuous policies of peace and cooperation followed by the socialist countries against the cold war strategy helped enhance their international prestige.

In 1956, the pre-war level of industrial production was increased four times in the USSR, in Czechoslovakia by 2.7 times, in Rumania around 3.3 times, in Hungary over 3 times, in Poland 6 times, in Bulgaria 6.5 times, in Albania around 12 times; the industrial output in the GDR had doubled the percentage which corresponded to its pre-war territory; in ten years of people's power industrial production in China tripped(\*).

(\*) These and the following statistics have been extracted from the report of Louis Saillant, General Secretary of the WFTU, to the 4th World Trade Union Congress, Leipzig, 1957.



But the basic difference between this and development in the capitalist countries over the same period is the totally opposite criteria adopted by socialist countries in the re-distribution of accumulated wealth, especially regarding wages, prices and consumer goods, the working day and social security. For example, in Czechoslovakia, the average monthly wage rose between 1953 and 1957 from 1,138 to 1,300 crowns whilst consumer prices fell six times over the same period; in the GDR, lower wage brackets were abolished in 1956 which meant an overall rise of workers' income by 250 million Marks; in Bulgaria, in 1957, wages across the board increased from 10 to 18%.

If we look at the increase in nominal wages compared with the fall in consumer goods prices and the improvement in the quality of products and services alongside better social security cover, we can see that the living standards of the workers and the entire population were continuously on the up.

The primary role of the trade unions in this process was also important as their rights and their involvement in management were being extended as they were the spokesmen for millions of manual and intellectual workers; a significant fact was the mass-based character of the trade unions in socialist countries who managed to organize, within their ranks, around 90% of the labour force.

Despite the difficulties arising from the imperialist blockade and the cold war, socialist development illustrated that an alternative to capitalist monopoly development was possible and in more than one country, and that centralized methods of economic planning with the democratic participation of workers enabled them to avoid the crisis and rationally increase the well-being of society as a whole.

The involvement of the trade unions from socialist countries in the WFTU underlined its universal character and helped to define its policy of international solidarity. It also gave the WFTU the chance to take full advantage of the workers' experiences in all countries. In opposition to this

rich and fascinating stage of development in socialist countries, the slander campaign, even amongst trade union ranks, was losing credibility in the eyes of the workers.

#### FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The mounting aspirations for national independence and social progress, liberation from the colonial yoke and the elimination of under-development never faltered and continued to accelerate the process of de-colonialization which commenced at the end of the Second World War. At the same time, and as a part of the same process, struggles for radical social changes became much sharper. These changes eliminated the obstacles to development in countries with dependent economies, defeated large-scale property ownership and the financial oligarchies allied to imperialism.

The workers were in the forefront of these struggles. Hence the examples of the 1951 and 1953 general strikes in Tunis and the January 30, 1953 day of protest against French domination, and the three-day general strike staged by the Moroccan working class in December 1953, to similar ends. In Algeria, the formation of the General Union of Algerian Workers gave fresh impetus to independence struggles, led by the National Liberation Front. In Kenya, despite brutal repression by the colonial authorities, the people rose up to demand devolution of land expropriated by the British colonialists. In Sudan, the national independence struggle was inspired by the 33-day railway workers' strike in 1947, for the right to form a trade union. In Bolivia in 1952, the courageous actions of the workers, later to become united around the Bolivian Workers' Centre (COB) were decisive in bringing down the military dictatorship.

The rate assumed by these struggles underlined the international links of workers' solidarity particularly on a regional or continental level. In December 1949, a *Trade Union*

64 *Conference on Asia and Australasia* was held in Peking, attended by trade unions from 14 countries. Despite a ban imposed by the colonial authorities in 1951, a meeting of the *Preparatory Committee of the All-African Trade Union Congress* was held in Dakar. In 1950, in Montevideo, a *South American Trade Union Conference* was held with the participation of 135 delegates from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay. In 1953, the 4th Congress of the Confederation of Latin American Workers confirmed the progress made by the Latin American trade union movement despite the division and the dubious methods used against these class-based trends.

#### THE WFTU: BULWARK OF WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The WFTU was constantly present in all these struggles despite repression and all sorts of restrictions imposed by reactionary governments on the expression of WFTU solidarity. Although trade union division undoubtedly had negative effects on the capacity of action of the trade union movement, it did not prevent the development of struggles nor isolate the WFTU.

Its activities during this period depended to a large extent on the conditions created by the positive changes occurring in international relations which were constantly improving. This whole period is generally referred to as the period of «detente». Certain aspects of the WFTU's activity at that time were not above criticism but one undoubtable fact is that without the constant mobilization of the workers in which the WFTU and its national organizations played a vital role, the changes in the world shortly afterwards would not have been possible.

The first genuine evidence of this was the Korean war. On July 5th, 1950, the WFTU launched an appeal to the workers of the world, revealing the true nature of the conflict

which was to cause much bloodshed to the Korean people and urged the organization of an International Week of Solidarity from July 10 which from then onwards became a regular event, each year, as part of international solidarity action in the world trade union movement. Activities staged during these harrowing three years, especially in 1953, were influential in bringing about the beginning of negotiations and then the armistice.

The struggle for peace, against the creation of military, aggressive blocs, against the danger of a nuclear war and against re-armament, particularly the re-armament of Germany in violation of the Yalta and Potsdam treaties, for a Treaty of Peace with Germany and recognition of the borders established at the end of the Second World War, for Europe of cooperation and security, were part of the priority activities of the WFTU throughout all this time.

The WFTU played a decisive role supporting the national liberation struggles by involving the workers and their trade unions in these struggles in a period marked by the emergence of the young trade union movement in developing countries. Helping organize the workers in these countries and training their trade union officials were tremendously important to consolidate the trade union movement in its fight against imperialist policies.

It comes as no surprise that faced with reactionary counter-attacks against trade union rights, solidarity with victims of repression should have been such an important part of the WFTU's work. This was true for the international campaign of solidarity organized by the WFTU against the abuses committed by the apartheid regime in South Africa, denunciation of the murder of the Tunisian trade union leader Ferhad Hached, the demand for the liberation of trade union leaders in Greece, India, Japan and many other countries.

An *International Solidarity Fund* was set up especially with contributions from national centres, this Fund is still alive today.

In international bodies, particularly the ILO, the WFTU



66 worked incessantly as the genuine spokesman of the workers' aspirations, despite the unfavourable correlation of power within this tripartite body and all forms of discrimination to which it was subjected.

The TUIs, for their part, energetically worked at strengthening their activities of an industrial level, in line with their specific structure and overcame the barriers imposed by the ITSs. Through patient and selfless work, they gradually gained authority and prestige throughout the world.

The key question of unity continued to be the main preoccupation of the WFTU despite the sharp ideological clashes which at that time whipped the trade union movement and the openly hostile attitude of the ICFTU leadership. In 1951, the General Council gave a great deal of time to discussions on unity during its Berlin session, on the basis of a concise report, which also contained some self-criticism, submitted by Benoit Frachon. Unfortunately, the ICFTU leaders slammed the door in the face of the WFTU every time it called for dialogue in a bid to achieve specific agreements on united action around common demands.

With the same lack of understanding, the ICFTU turned down a WFTU invitation to the *3rd World Trade Union Congress* in Vienna (10-21 October 1953), open to the participation of non-affiliated organizations. Of the 700 delegates who attended, representing a total of 88 million workers, 120 came from organizations of different international affiliation or were autonomous. This did not, however, present an obstacle to reaching common conclusions. This was to be repeated in successive congresses and was later enshrined in the Constitution, thus establishing a precedent for international trade union organizations.

The Vienna Congress was a new and significant step forward on the WFTU's road towards uniting all workers. It studied in great detail the workers' demands and industrial disputes, pinpointing general elements likely to unite workers of the most varied trends. It drafted a *Charter of Trade Union Rights* and called for mobilization of all sections of

the trade union movement in its defence. It warned of the dangers of sectarianism in its own ranks and stressed the need to work patiently for united action regardless of provocation from adversaries. It welcomed progress made in unity in various countries and made a special appeal to the vast movement of autonomous organizations which had emerged after the 1949 split to constitute a common front with WFTU organizations.

The world centre came out on top after the difficult years following the split. It entered a new stage in its development which was to culminate four years later with the 4th World Trade Union Congress. It was precisely then that more obstacles emerged...

#### MORE PROBLEMS

#### AND A LONG-LASTING SOLUTION

In 1956, more provocation was mounted against the WFTU in the ridiculous form of forging documents. The Austrian government fell in with this slander campaign and with surprising haste closed down the Vienna headquarters of the WFTU. When police broke into the building, WFTU staff barely managed to salvage a few pieces of equipment and part of the archives and documentation. But this harsh blow was not to stop the activities of the WFTU, which will always be present wherever the workers are. Immediately after these events, the Central Council of Czechoslovak Trade Unions offered new headquarters in Prague. Thanks to the hospitality of the workers, the people and authorities of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the WFTU finally found stability and security on the banks of the river Moldava from whence it was able to carry on its work in total freedom, for the good of the workers of the world.

In 1978, during the 9th World Trade Union Congress held in Prague, the Czechoslovak trade unions once again proved their generous hospitality and donated a modern

68 building in the centre of Prague to the WFTU, where it has been ever since.

The expulsion of the WFTU from Vienna was, nevertheless, an anachronism of bygone times since the era of the cold war was coming to an end. Two significant facts heralded time to come: in 1955, the Afro-Asian Conference met in Bandung and in Geneva «summit» negotiations began between the United States, France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union.

But this is a topic for another chapter.

V

## The world changes (1956-1973)

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As the 4th World Trade Union Congress opened its doors in Leipzig on October 4th, 1957 the signals from the very first «Sputnik» were heralding the era of space conquest.

The coincidence is symbolic; this secular step of civilization towards progress happened by chance at the same time as an equally significant event in this new era. For the first time ever the broadest possible world trade union forum was held in a country ruled by the workers, in one of the new socialist states to emerge after the Second World War — the German Democratic Republic.

On German soil, the launching pad for two world wars during this century, for the first time ever a workers' government advocated a policy of peace. The reactionary forces attempted to ignore this historic fact with the *Hallstein Doctrine* which gave the FRG the «right» to represent Germany as a whole, ignoring the post-war Eastern borders and refusing to enter into relations with states who recognized the



70 GDR. The presence of representatives of the world trade union movement in the GDR was a response to this policy backed by imperialism; the active role of the trade union movement at that time helped defeat this policy years later, which was one of the main achievements of the period of detente.

The relics of the war, which the Congress delegates were able to see with their own eyes, were a strong warning to everyone of the consequences of imperialist bellicose policies. Nevertheless, the seeds sown by the GDR working people to build a new society were already bearing fruit: indicating that the world could change and, in fact, was already changing.

#### UNIVERSAL ASPIRATIONS: PEACE AND INDEPENDENCE

Between 1956 — when the WFTU settled in Prague — and 1973 — when the 8th World Trade Union Congress defined the WFTU's open-door policy — came 17 rich years marking the transition from the cold war to detente. The general trend and driving force behind this development was the upsurge of the forces of peace and progress throughout the world, of which the trade union movement was an integral part.

Some examples: (obviously these illustrative facts do not always fall within the time-limits which we have selected at random to mark this period).

First of all it is important to remember the resounding collapse of the former colonial empires, the victory of the peoples of Indochina over French colonialists in 1954, the independence of Cyprus and many African countries in 1960, India's winning back of Goa in 1961, the independence of Algeria in 1962 ... In December 1960, reflecting the new powerplay — the 14th General Assembly of the United

Nations adopted the historical declaration on the independence of countries and territories still under colonial rule.

In 1955, in Bandung, Indonesia, Heads of State from 29 countries in Africa and Asia issued a joint statement outlining what were then termed principles of *peaceful coexistence*. In 1961, the movement of *non-aligned countries* was set up in Belgrade to promote peace and to defend peoples' independence.

In 1956, Egypt's announcement of its intention to nationalize the Suez Canal was a heavy set-back for the imperialist monopolies; and the Arab peoples' national liberation struggles became more socially-orientated. In Latin America, the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 sparked off a new surge of struggles. In Chile in 1971, the left-wing coalition of Popular Unity won the elections and Dr. Salvador Allende became President of the Republic.

Of course, we use the term «*general trend*» because this was by no means a straight-forward process. Imperialism was not resigned to losing ground and whenever possible resorted to Harry Truman's 1947 doctrine of «world policeman».

Armed aggression continued against Egypt in 1956, Lebanon in 1958, Cuba in 1961, Vietnam in 1963, the Dominican Republic in 1965, Egypt and Syria in 1967 and so on. Destabilizing or overthrowing governments which did not suit the State Department's own ideals became the favourite ploy of the CIA's «secret activities».

The CIA also took to organizing bloody coups as in Brazil in 1964, Indonesia in 1965, Greece 1967, Sudan and Bolivia in 1971, Uruguay and Chile in 1973 ... This criminal policy caused innumerable deaths. On behalf of all such victims, we give special mention to the WFTU Vice-President *Ahmed Shaffie El Sheikh*, martyr of the Sudanese working class, who was murdered by the Numeiry regime in 1971.

A chain of serious international incidents broke out in 1960 when a spy plane was sent to overfly Soviet territories, and again in 1962, with the so-called «Caribbean crisis»

72 which the US administration carried to the verge of nuclear war.

The world was changing once for all.

The combined forces of peace were in a position to impose a decisive turnabout in international relations. The Bandung principles were not just theories — they could actually be put into operation.

For the first time after the war, in 1955, the governments of the United States, France, Britain and the Soviet Union met in a summit meeting in Geneva and embarked upon the road to detente which was to continue along a rocky path of negotiations and partial agreements, to culminate in Helsinki in 1975, with the signing of the *Final Act of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation*.

Would it be possible to avoid another war which, due to the highly destructive power acquired by nuclear weapons, would cause untold damage to mankind?

Workers' livelihood was also at stake.

#### THE RIGHT TO A DECENT LIFE

As mentioned earlier the launching of the first satellite also heralded something which was rather characteristic of this stage in the development of civilization: the prodigious advances in labour skills and knowledge, usually classed as *«the scientific and technological revolution»*. This was the advent of a new labour world, with the far-reaching consequences of the use of science in the production process. The vast potential offered by new technology was to open up an era of record progress in society. Mankind was in a position to eradicate hunger and poverty.

In socialist countries, the benefits of the rational and planned use of science and technology were seen in society by the continuous increase in productivity and workers' well-being. However, in the second half of this prodigious century it became crystal clear that capitalist society was in-

capable of coping with the urgent needs of millions of human beings. What an incredible anachronism! People dying of hunger, whilst scientific progress was defying all laws of nature.

In 1957, the 4th World Trade Union Congress noted that economic growth in developed capitalist countries was based on increasing productivity through heavy exploitation of workers. One such example is US Steel. In 1939, US Steel made 13 cents profit per hour of work on a manual labourer and 42 cents in 1947. This rose to 1.87 dollars in 1957; at that time, the 17 largest international monopolies (14 US and three British) each made profits of more than 100 million dollars per annum(\*).

This increased productivity certainly had no bearing on improving the living and working conditions of the workers, as promised by the capitalists behind this drive. Instead, wage increases obtained through struggles were systematically absorbed by the inflationary spiral, whilst conditions of hygiene and safety at work deteriorated considerably. A good illustration of this are the fatal accidents in the mining industry in particular. 1958 was a really tragic year for miners around the world, 182 people died in the Chinakuri disaster in India, there were a whole range of tragic accidents in Gessolungo, Italy, the United States and Canada; other fatal accidents happened in 1959 in the FRG, in Clydesdale, South Africa, in 1960 and in 1970 89 miners died in an accident in Zambia, to name but a few.

At the same time, wage policy was often used to divide and stifle workers' struggles, using the old tactic of granting special privileges to certain sectors.

This was particularly true with the increasing internationalization of the economy. Imperialist monopolies were avidly and shamelessly plundering the resources of underdeveloped countries, thereby tightening dependence, depriving

(\*) Louis Saillant, Report to the 4th WTUC, 1957



74 them of their wealth and widening the gulf with the highly industrialized countries. The monopolies were the only benefactors of the inequalities in capitalist society, the weaknesses which still persisted in workers' international solidarity, one of the factors of which was undoubtedly the division of the world trade union movement.

At the beginning of the '70s, all the glamour of the rich capitalist economy faded and gave way to the first signs of the acute crisis which is still rocking the boat today. In 1973, the 8th World Trade Union Congress noted that:

- 50 per cent of the world's population suffered from malnutrition;
- 100 million workers were jobless;
- 800 million people could neither read or write;
- 100,000 workers per year died due to accidents at work: one victim every 5 minutes. (\*)

As for the socialist countries:

*"Unbiased economists admit that the socialist countries' economies are following more stable and rapid development rates than any others. Undoubtedly, their stake in world trade is increasing, particularly in the production sphere. Significantly, increased production is possible thanks to labour productivity and not labour intensity. This increased production is basically possible due to the sustained development of science and technology..."*

*"...Not to mention that unemployment — the main scourge of capitalism and the grave concern of workers in capitalist countries — does not exist over there".(\*)*

Life in socialist countries clearly showed that social problems were not «inevitable ills of civilization», as some of the proponents of capitalism would have it, but the result of a

(\*) Pierre Gensous, Report to the 8th WTUC, 1973

75 system based on the exploitation of man by man; as men established social relations, men themselves could change them. The role of the trade unions in socialist countries, where workers' participation in economic management and achievements in social security are unrivalled, is of keen interest to all honest trade unionists.

It is natural that faced with the consequences of the capitalist crisis, the workers and their trade unions should actively defend their rights, jobs and wages against austerity policies formulated single-handedly by the monopolies merely in relation to workers' wages, and against mounting authoritarianism and repression, for national independence, development and social progress, joining forces in many countries with other sectors of society against imperialism and internal reaction.

Here are a few examples of some of the great actions during this period:

200,000 Belgian metalworkers went on strike in 1957; actions continued in Belgium in 1959 and in 1960 turned into a massive national strike lasting five weeks against the austerity policy and factory closures staged by one million workers. In 1959, for 116 days 500,000 brought the US steel industry to a standstill; in August the same year, 300,000 Argentinian metalworkers downed tools. In 1960, Japanese miners stayed out on strike for 288 days in protest over steps to streamline the industry causing job losses. In 1962, miners in Asturias, Spain, challenged the repression of the Franco regime; arrests, including that of the anti-fascist fighter Julian Grimau, later sentenced to death and executed in 1963 despite a mass international solidarity campaign, did not frighten off the workers who started a three-month strike in 1963. In 1965, the general strike of Bolivian workers was brutally repressed and the general secretary of the Building Union in La Paz, Adrian Arce, was shot by the army. In 1967, 1968 and 1969, the French workers undertook sweeping actions, particularly so because the various trade union centres acted in unison. The firm action of the French

76 working class in 1968 gave rise to broad international solidarity. Chile, Argentina and Uruguay also witnessed large-scale mobilization and clashes with repressive machinery...

At the height of these struggles, many illusions were shattered as to the effectiveness of class-collaboration and divisionist schemes. The whole process of detente helped trade unionists worldwide to get to know each other better and contributed to mutual understanding in all its diverse forms.

### CHANGES IN TRADE UNION WORLD

We have already seen how trade union division was forged from the outside by class enemies, plunging it into further disarray and was extremely detrimental to the entire trade union movement in its struggles against imperialist and monopoly attacks on living and working conditions of the peoples in the capitalist world.

However, as early as the 1950's, new factors came to light which indicated that the workers' aspirations for unity were not to be stifled and a path forged towards unity between prejudices and other man-made barriers.

The trade union movement gained considerable momentum throughout the world; there was virtually no country without a fledgling or well-structured trade union organization. Obviously, notably different circumstances and conditions in each country were mirrored in trade union life. Meanwhile, though, people were realizing the importance of tightening ranks in union.

In various countries, conditions were created to overcome division. On the one hand, united centres were formed by merging organizations of different international affiliation. On the other hand, a large number of autonomous trade unions without international affiliation also emerged on the

world stage. Both trends played a positive role in re-vitalizing international trade union relations. (\*)

On an industrial level, common objectives rose to the fore. The TUIs gained considerable strength in united action around specific demands in their respective branches of industry, even, in some cases, managing to break down the resistance of the ITSS. Their membership swelled and more and more non-affiliated organizations began to take part in their International Trade Conferences. In 1955, the sphere of action of the Post and Communications TUI broadened out to include civil servants, workers in health, finances and public services and became the Public Employees' TUI. In 1958, the Textile and Clothing TUI and the Leather, Fur and Footwear TUI merged into one single international trade body. In 1959, the Commerce TUI was founded. At that time the WFTU had eleven trade branches. In accordance with amendments to the Constitution in 1969, which did away with the idea of the TUIs being «industrial departments» and gave them greater autonomy, they began to develop direct contacts with international agencies such as the ILO; the FISE obtained special consultative status at UNESCO, developing cooperation in various programmes such as functional literacy. On the whole, the audience and international prestige of the TUIs increased substantially.

Broadly united autonomous organizations sprang up in different regions. It should not be forgotten that during the years of division, the ICFTU was especially active in setting up its own regional structures; as for the WFTU, perhaps the only case of an «organic link» was the Latin American Workers' Confederation (CTAL) which took an active part

(\*) A noteworthy example is when, in 1955, the recently created United Workers' Centre of Chile (CUT) took the initiative to organize a world referendum amongst all workers to poll views on re-uniting the international trade union movement. The same centre launched the initiative for an International Day of Solidarity with Spain, held in 1963, and was also the convenor of the World Trade Union Assembly on Multinational Corporations in 1973.



78 in the foundation of the WFTU, but the creation of regional structures as such, was never established by the Constitution.

In 1956, in Damascus, a trade union conference of Arab countries founded the *International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions* (ICATU). In 1957, the *Union of Workers' of Black Africa* was set up in Cotonou, in 1961 it was opened up to other organizations and became the *All-African Trade Union Federation*; African regional unity was to be strengthened later on in 1973 with the creation of the *Organization of African Trade Union Unity* (OATUU). In 1964, in Brasilia, a *Congress of Trade Union Unity of Workers in Latin America* decided to become a Standing Congress; hence the CPUSTAL was born. All three regional organizations retained their international independence, but established close cooperation with the WFTU. They stood for the united action of the world trade union movement and the broadest possible international solidarity. (\*)

In March 1969, on the initiative of the WFTU and the All-African Trade Union Federation, an important event was held in Conakry, designed to find ways of cooperation and common action between workers in developed and developing countries. *The Consultative Conference on Solidarity between Trade Unions in Europe and Africa* was attended by 133 delegates from 28 African countries, 16 European countries and the TUIs, along with the WFTU, the AATUF and the ICATU. Common ground was discovered in the struggle against imperialist monopolies and colonialism, "for the development of economic and social aid in respect of sovereignty and national independence."

Bilateral relations between unions of different persuasion or international affiliation, especially with unions in socialist

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(\*) In 1973, the *European Trade Union Confederation* was set up in the European Economic Community, but its sphere of action was limited right from the start by the exclusion of WFTU member organizations and other autonomous trade union forces.

79 countries, went a long way towards breaking down the barriers of the cold war. Trade union relations between the two German states were renewed in 1959 and in 1960. Also around this time the Trade Union Conferences of Baltic Sea Countries and Norway were held periodically, and were later enlarged to include Iceland.

In 1956, the 8th session of the WFTU General Council in Sofia pointed out that encouraging the exchange of delegations would be a good way of promoting relations. Despite restrictions imposed by the ICFTU on its own affiliates, this method did prove worthwhile. A typical example of this was in 1960, when a Soviet delegation from a Wood Workers' Trade Union visited its counterpart in Britain, here we publish extracts from a joint statement issued afterwards:

*"The object of this statement is to express the opinion of both trade unions and to illustrate that contradictions between national representative groups are frequently officially fashioned and can be easily broken down through a broader exchange of opinions and with a will to understand their different opinions."* (\*)

Towards the end of this period, the attitude of the *World Confederation of Labour*, the WCL (formerly the IFCTU until 1968) changed considerably. Consequently a meeting was held for the first time between the WCL and the WFTU in Brussels in 1971. The ICFTU was also invited but refused to attend what would have been the first summit meeting of the trade union movement since the split in 1949. This meeting was the beginning of consultations on a periodical basis between the three world centres. These meetings revealed the differences in opinions between them but also the many points upon which their opinions converged.

In 1972, the Yugoslav trade unions called a meeting of a wide range of organizations in Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia) to

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(\*) Quoted in the *Report of WFTU Activities, 1957-1961*.

80 convene a broad-based *United Trade Union Meeting* which was held shortly afterwards in Brussels. The Brussels meeting was attended by the WFTU, the WCL and its regional organizations, the ICATU, the All-African Trade Union Federation, the CPUSTAL and various autonomous national organizations.

The World Union Assembly on the Activities of Multinational Corporations, held in Santiago de Chile in April 1973, grouped together the largest number of organizations since the split in 1949.

A fresh breath of life began sweeping the ranks of the trade union movement worldwide, revealing that division was an anachronism and that it could and should be overcome.

Naturally, all these changes were mirrored in the broad, comprehensive united concept of the WFTU.

#### FOR A PROGRAMME TO SERVE ALL WORKERS

It is through the identification of common demands that united action is forged. Throughout all these years, the WFTU paid special attention to this. In 1956, on the initiative of the trade union in the Olivetti factory in Turin, a European Trade Union Conference on a shorter working week assembled WFTU, ICFTU and autonomous organizations; in 1961, another meeting of this type, organized in Vienna, was attended by 138 delegates, 83 of whom were from ICFTU member organizations. In September 1959, a consultative meeting of various organizations in Europe and Africa, on the consequences of the creation of the European Common Market, according to the Treaty of Rome, decided to set up a coordination and action committee. From 1962, consultative meetings were held on a regular basis in Leipzig on trade union action against the mounting capitalist concentration and new facets of this known as multinational or transnational corporations; in 1966, an international trade

union conference on this topic was held in Budapest and gave rise to a *World Trade Union Consultative Committee for United Action against the Monopolies*, which was to develop successful coordination work and promote solidarity.

Certain specific categories were given particular attention: in June 1956, the *1st Trade Union Conference on the Problems of Working Women* met in Budapest, then again in 1964 in Bucharest and in 1972 in Prague; in 1958, in Prague, the *World Trade Union Conference of Young Workers* was held for the first time, then again in Varna in 1970.

Solidarity with victims of repression has always been present in the entire work of the WFTU. On the decision of the General Council, in 1960, a *Trade Union and Legal Committee for the Defence and Broadening of Trade Union Rights and Safeguarding the Victims of Anti-Trade Union Repression* was set up. The WFTU knows that the conquest of trade union rights depends essentially on the organized force of the workers and their action on the level of international institutions, primarily the ILO, which could, despite its notoriously ineffective machinery, be an important platform to defend workers' interests. Indeed, there is a tremendous difference between official declarations of international forums and the harsh reality for the workers under repressive regimes; this contradiction was glaring in 1968, proclaimed *International Year of Human Rights* by the UN and in 1971, *International Year of Struggle against Racism and Racial Discrimination*. Despite these limitations, the WFTU never ceased its efforts and contributed, for example, to the drafting of *International Covenants on Human Rights*, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966. At the 57th International Labour Conference in 1972, it was on the basis of a WFTU draft that a resolution was adopted on colonial oppression, racial discrimination and violation of trade union rights by Portugal in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau.

On the decision of the 14th session of the Executive Bureau (Moscow, June 24-27, 1967) the 4th World Trade Un-



82 ion Congress was opened again to non-affiliates. Debates reflected the changes occurring throughout the world and the activities of the trade union organizations. In his concluding address, Louis Saillant declared that the discussions had proved "the efficiency of the united policy with which we have been persevering since the 3rd World Trade Union Congress", adding:

*"We can now say, brothers and sisters, that we have outgrown the bitterness, so to speak, which we experienced at the Milan Congress, just three months after the split in the international trade union movement".(\*)*

The 4th Congress dealt at length with an in-depth report on the national liberation struggles and the tasks of the trade unions, on the basis of a report submitted by S. A. Dange. It was obvious that colonialism, as a system, was nearing its end, thanks to the struggles of the peoples and the new correlation of forces in the world. Nevertheless, the WFTU warned against imperialist manoeuvres and their intention to gain economic domination by the most subtle form of «neo-colonialism». Once again, the decisive role in this battle was played by the workers and their trade union organizations. As a sign of the new times, new states emerged and joined the United Nations, which was to inspire the following comment taken from the report mentioned above:

*"When the man from Africa with his robes and in insignia walks in and sits in the assembly of independent nations how proud the oppressed in the world must feel and how bitter must the imperialist be!"*

These debates continued and materialized in the 5th World Trade Union Congress in Moscow (December 4-15, 1961) which was a global attempt of the WFTU to reflect, in

(\*) From the 4th WTUC, Leipzig, 1957.

its objectives, the results of united experience worldwide. The size of the Congress itself (around 1,000 delegates from 97 countries, representing 142 million workers) promised broad-ranging debates which were summarized in the documents adopted. The most important document was the «Programme of Trade Union Action Today in Defence of Workers' Rights and Interests».

As we can see, this was a programme for *all* workers and not merely a WFTU programme. The main topics can be seen in the various chapters.

The Moscow Congress was held at a particularly important stage in the struggles of the peoples for national independence; the old colonial empires broke up one by one and no one could prevent this. A report presented by Ibrahim Zakaria (then a WFTU secretary) assessed the part played by the trade unions and workers in these struggles and the WFTU and its organizations who spearheaded the solidarity campaigns, outlining the new tasks before the trade union movement.

The Congress in a resolution on this, applauded the WFTU's solidarity with the workers in countries under colonial rule or with recently liberated states, in particular the creation of a broad International Trade Union Committee on Solidarity with Algeria and a similar type of Committee in Solidarity with the Workers and People of South Africa. After pinpointing the main solidarity tasks, the resolution concluded:

*"Today, the complete and final elimination of the colonial system is a task of primary importance for the peoples and for all forces of peace and social progress in the world. (\*)*

The Congress also agreed on a vehicle to develop the united struggles of the workers for their demands, which was the

(\*) From the 5th WTUC, Moscow, 1961.

84 «Charter of Social Security» which was up-dated in 1982, during the 10th World Trade Union Congress.

Shortly after the 4th WTUC (on November 3, 1957), WFTU President *Giuseppe di Vittorio* died suddenly. He was a prominent figure in the trade union movement in Italy and throughout the world and played a vital role in the consolidation of the WFTU after the 1949 split. The 19th session of the General Council (Warsaw, April 1959) elected *Agostino Novella*, General Secretary of the CGIL, to this important post. When he stepped down to take on another position in Italy, the 5th WTUC elected another prominent Italian leader, *Renato Bitossi*.

In 1965, in its 20th anniversary year, the WFTU was in a position to present a positive account of its work, its esteem amongst the labour world was increasing, so was its strong cooperation with non-affiliated organizations, especially regionally. The WFTU was also ready to fortify its role in forging united trade union action worldwide.

At this time, the 6th World Trade Union Congress was held in Warsaw (October 8-22, 1965). The different circumstances, the complexity and maturity of the trade union movement were illustrated by the following:

*"Each country has its own methods of struggle under different circumstances consequently each trade union centre selects the methods and programmes which suit it best."*(\*)

The 6th World Trade Union Congress analysed at length the implementation of the Trade Union Programme of Action and the WFTU's initiatives for unity, the evolution of the trade union movement and new opportunities for greater international trade union cooperation. At the same time,

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(\*) From the Resolution on the first item on the agenda, 6th WTUC, 1965.

it continued to discuss solidarity with the struggle of the workers and people in countries under colonial rule or recently liberated to conquer or consolidate their national independence, for independent economic and social development, against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

During these years the internal debate became more self-critical, weaknesses became apparent in the course of adapting to new situations, in putting equal emphasis on different objectives regarding differences due to specific circumstances in each country or region and to what extent we had to meet the changing trade union situation in all fields.

It was necessary to up-date the Constitution as a whole. The task of reviewing the Constitution, mandated by the 6th World Trade Union Congress was started by the General Council and finished by the 7th World Trade Union Congress in Budapest (October 17-26, 1969).

The revised Constitution highlighted the freedom of affiliates in the implementation of WFTU policy and established the independence of the TUs. Another chapter was devoted to regional activities. The structure was simplified, the Executive Committee and the Executive Bureau were simply replaced by the Bureau.

At the 1969 Congress, due to ill health, *Louis Saillant* was obliged step down from the post of General Secretary which he had occupied since the creation of the WFTU. *Pierre Gensous*, a French leader who since 1965 was Deputy General Secretary, was elected to his post. In recognition of his outstanding work, Louis Saillant was elected Honorary President. With the death of *Renato Bitossi* that same year, the Uruguayan workers' leader *Enrique Pastorino* was elected to the post of President.

The 7th World Trade Union Congress, held just as the trade union movement was notching up considerable points worldwide, decided to embark on a detailed analysis of the nature and extent of the changes which had occurred throughout the world and within the trade union movement itself, in order to confirm that it was on the right track, that it



86 was employing the correct methods and forms of action. This would enable the trade union movement to better fulfil its mission. The changes in the world were bound to be reflected in the WFTU itself. The WFTU as a whole then embarked on a successful period of considering its role, concept, structure and its methods.

## VI

## Meeting the great challenges of our time (1973-1982)

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The changes described in the previous chapter were, over the next ten years, to have drastic and sweeping repercussions within the trade union movement.

In 1971, President Nixon decreed the non-convertability of the US dollar into gold, one of the main axes of the monetary system adopted by capitalist governments in Bretton Woods in 1946 and decided on a sharp devaluation of the dollar and a 10% tax on imports to the US. This triggered off a radical financial crisis throughout the capitalist world.

The tentacles of the crisis grasped all aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life. The 8th World Trade Union Congress in 1973 characterized the situation as follows: "These are by no means transitory or localized difficulties, but a new phase in the overall crisis of the capitalist system itself. Faced with the crisis which is undermining the capitalist system the monopolies and their home states are

88 seeking to make all working people and chiefly wage-earners bear the consequences."(\*)

The WFTU Bureau in a special session on this topic in January 1975, in Berlin (GDR), adopted a special document which reads:

*"The crisis in the different capitalist countries is one of structure. It shows how the profound contradictions within the capitalist system as a whole are becoming more acute. It gives rise to a new economic situation which, apart from contingent variations, results in a profound and lasting disturbance of the system. It can be seen in permanently rocketing inflation, massive unemployment and growth and outlet difficulties. The crisis is of an unprecedented nature. It combines inflation and recession. It affects the spheres of money, energy, raw materials, food and ecology. It is accompanied by considerable speculation. It increases the antagonism between different capitalist countries. It is at the heart of the crisis in relationships between the capitalist countries and the developing countries. It generates a great social crisis."*

The main responsibility for the aggravation of this crisis and its spreading throughout the world falls on the forms of capitalist concentration, today known as transnational corporations. They are also directly implicated in the criminal acts of aggression against the interests of the peoples: the case of Chile in 1973 is notorious, when the TNCs of US origin, ITT, Anaconda and Kennecott, took it upon themselves, through the nationalization of the copper industry by the Salvador Allende government, to destabilize the country and organized the bloody fascist coup d'état of September 11th.

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(\*) Policy document adopted by the 8th WTUC, 1973.

In 1947 — a happy coincidence in that it was on May Day — the UN General Assembly adopted the Programme for a New International Economic Order, which was to enshrine the inalienable right of nations, big and small, to sovereignty over their resources. Such principles, nevertheless, can only be achieved through the peoples' struggle: the imperialist order is incapable of solving any of the social problems of the world today.

#### THE WORKERS' RESPONSE

The period we are dealing with here bears witness to the intensification of workers' actions throughout the capitalist world. Generally speaking, they were long, drawn-out struggles against a class enemy determined not to give in, which further highlights the value of the victories won. They were also characterized by a marked tendency towards united actions.

A full account of all these struggles is not possible within the limits of this publication, for which just a few examples are sufficient for the period 1973-1978:

In 1973, workers in the Pamplona region in Spain went on strike, challenging Franco's repression, workers in Uruguay rose up against the coup d'état with a general strike and organized work sit-ins for two weeks, the French workers became mobilized in defence of their jobs, threatened by factory closures, particularly in the «Lip» company in Besançon, the miners of Carltonville, South Africa, went on strike for better wages and working conditions.

1974 began with a veritable wave of strike action which shook virtually all of capitalist Europe: the British miners, public servants in the FRG, a general strike in Italy, similar actions in France, Spain and Portugal. The actions of workers in Greece were decisive in bringing down the military dictatorship.

In 1975, a strike brought mining in Bolivia to a standstill.



International solidarity won its first victory when the Court of Cassation in Madrid reduced sentences imposed on Marcelino Camacho and other Spanish workers' leaders, victims of the famous «Trial 1001», but the Franco regime committed another crime by executing five young Basque fighters. The FRG parliament adopted a discriminatory law against civil servants, known as work bans or «Berufsverbot».

In 1976, 250,000 Spanish metalworkers went on strike, the Bolivian miners took further action and a general strike paralysed France in protest over the austerity policy.

In 1977, the May Day demonstration in Istanbul came under brutal repression, the Turkish metalworkers went on strike and a powerful united protest was staged in Colombia.

In 1978, for the first time, organizations such as the WFTU, ICFTU, WCL and OATUU agreed to convene a Week of Action against Apartheid (in March), the general strike of Nicaraguan workers accelerated the demise of the Somoza regime, the workers of Iran courageously stood up to repression, US miners went on strike, Brazilian metalworkers' actions rapidly spread to other branches plunging the military regime further into crisis...

These struggles were being staged at a time when, despite the ferocious resistance of imperialism, radical changes were still sweeping the world: the fascist dictatorships of Greece and Portugal fell, the Portuguese colonies in Africa were liberated, in countries such as Ethiopia, radical revolutionary processes were underway, the Vietnamese people defeated US intervention and achieved the reunification of their country. The decade ended with the crash of two bastions of imperialism: the Somoza regime in Nicaragua and that of the Shah of Iran.

Conditions were more favourable for the forces of peace and progress who achieved considerable advances in the field of «detente». In 1975, governments in Europe, the US and Canada signed the Final Accord in Helsinki for the Conference on European Security and Cooperation.

The socialist countries, in the midst of the crisis in the capitalist system, revealed the advantages of their planned economy and the successful participation of the workers in management. The absence of ills such as unemployment and their capacity for sustained economic growth, absorbing the difficulties transmitted by the capitalist crisis in accordance with the needs of the people and the wide range of trade union rights in these countries cannot be disputed.

Imperialism reacted against these developments by increasing its aggression. The magnates of the capitalist world attempted to formulate a global strategy of domination through a so-called trilateral commission. The most aggressive circles of imperialism, identified as the military-industrial complex, at the end of this period, managed to consolidate their ruling position in the capitalist world, disrupting the process of detente and establishing the strategy of confrontation. As a result of this, mankind, as never before, became threatened with annihilation in a nuclear catastrophe.

The decisive factor, however, was the level reached by workers' action and their unity. It was vital to mirror this process in the international trade union movement too.

Before a rapidly changing world, the WFTU had to respond to new demands with fresh impetus.

#### THE «OPEN DOOR» CONGRESS

The 8th World Trade Union Congress in Varna, Bulgaria (15-22 October 1973), presented a coherent response from the world trade union movement to the new developments. From the land of Georgi Dimitrov, maestro for generations and inexhaustible fighter for the unity of democratic forces, the WFTU, through its Congress, further highlighted the need for unity and solidarity without restrictions amongst all workers of the world, opening its doors to everyone who shared the same desire. This was also the beginning of a new

92 phase in the discussions within the WFTU concerning its role, objectives and work methods.

The framework could not have been more appropriate: alongside representatives of the 55 centres affiliated to the WFTU and 12 industrial federations belonging to the TUIs, were delegates from 113 non-affiliated organizations and observers from four international and regional organizations, including the World Confederation of Labour. The majority participation of non-affiliates was not just a paper figure: many non-affiliated delegates were members of the commissions and offered their contributions to the final drafting of the documents, which were not just WFTU documents, but those of the 208 million workers of the 93 countries represented at the Congress.

The report from this Congress stated:

*"It is true that workers have different religions, philosophies and political beliefs, but these differences, in our opinion, should not impede workers' united action nor their membership to a single trade union organization should be able to assemble all workers on the basis of defending their common interests, regardless of their opinions, through the tried and trusted method of trade union democracy. Moreover, we believe that unity is the most reliable and efficient way of achieving and guaranteeing, in the long run, the aspirations of workers. Today, this is more certain than ever before due to the contemporary factors of capitalist concentration and tighter inter-dependence of monopoly and capitalist state interests, and of the crucial struggle for independence and social progress".*

This broad trade union forum formulated a programme for the broadest possible united action in its *Policy Document* and the *Charter of Trade Union Rights and the Economic and Social Demands of Workers in the Capitalist Countries at the Present Time*.

The first of these documents, after analysing the different

aspects of the international situation and the tasks of the trade unions, concludes: 93

*"The workers and their trade unions are faced with multiple problems of increasing complexity and size. Their solution requires increasingly collective talks, exchanges of experiences in depth and fraternal dialogues at every level between all trade union organizations whatever their international affiliation, their ideology and the economic system in which they function. The opposition which confronts the workers in their aspirations for improved well-being, freedom, democracy and peace demands unity and the closing of ranks.*

*Contemporary factors which make the demand for unity all the more imperative are as follows:*

- greater worldwide concentration of capitalist monopolies;

- greater inter-dependence of interests and concerted action of monopolies in capitalist countries which enables them to resist more effectively the demands of the workers. There are nowadays new qualities to be found in proletarian internationalism, working-class solidarity, unity of action and trade union unity. Isolation, self-centredness, sectarianism and attempts to solve current issues without reference to fraternal bodies doom to weakness the organizations which practice them. Those who support these limitations, or accept them, objectively help to limit and weaken working-class struggles. It is high time to put an end to the reticence with which certain circles oppose the development of joint action and which are partly the remains of the cold war atmosphere. Such errors are alien to the spirit and demands of our times.

*It is because they are more aware of those realities that the workers of today are increasingly anxious to achieve unity, and the noticeable progress in this field is the hallmark of the present period".*



The WFTU itself is no stranger to this process of renewal. The Policy Document of the Congress dedicates a whole chapter to this, from which we have selected the following:

*"A modern world trade union organization, such as the WFTU seeks to be, is a voluntary association of trade union organizations, united for the common defence of the workers' interests through initiatives and forms of action or organization which were collectively agreed... By developing all sides of its character to the full, the WFTU will be in a still stronger position to widen its joint activities.*

*The WFTU, the TUIs and their affiliated organizations are fully aware that in a divided trade union world they cannot alone provide a complete and lasting solution to present-day problems. Without the WFTU and its organizations no one can claim to provide a valid and complete solution to the same problems alone, or through deliberately disregarding partners.*

*Today, new opportunities are offered. The WFTU intends to make the most of them and even create new ones. It will further step up all activities capable of assisting a rapprochement between all trade union organizations and widening their joint activity on the basis of a wide platform acceptable to all. It will do this with the intention of achieving more effective action for the fulfilment of the workers' aspirations, with respect for the character and equality in law of every trade union organization. With this aim it will endeavour to involve trade union organizations, be they national, regional or international, in its activities, so that the WFTU and the world trade union movement as a whole may draw on a wealth of experience in defining its aims and activities."*

To this end, the Congress recommended that the General Council revise the Constitution to underline equal opportunities for participation of member organizations in the formulation and implementation of guidelines and the autono-

my of the TUIs. The concept of *associate member* was incorporated to facilitate the cooperation, within the WFTU, of organizations who, for various reasons, did not feel able to join as affiliates.

#### YEARS OF PROGRESS AND SEARCH

Between 1973 and 1978, the WFTU opened out considerably with 17 new member organizations. In accordance with amendments to the Constitution, the CGIL of Italy became an associate member. Important cooperation agreements were signed with the ICATU, the OATUU and the CPUTAL member organizations, who agreed on issues connected to international solidarity and with many non-affiliated organizations. The audience and the prestige of the WFTU increased considerably.

On October 28, 1974, *Louis Saillant*, one of the founders of the WFTU, died. He had been general secretary for 24 years and honorary president since 1969. The memory of him will remain united to the WFTU for ever and to the current struggles for unity.

Relations with the ICFTU and the WCL developed at a slower pace than that desired and necessary. On the one hand, meetings between the Secretariats of the WFTU and the WCL became more regular and alternated between their respective headquarters in Prague and Brussels, on the other hand the ICFTU leadership continued to practice its policy of isolation vis-a-vis the WFTU, imposing a whole range of restrictions and bans on its affiliates who wanted to cooperate with WFTU member organizations. The recently founded European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) was resisting the possibility of becoming an authentic, united regional organization, denying affiliation to many large centres on political grounds; only the CGIL of Italy was admitted, once it changed from WFTU affiliate to associate member.

More tangible changes were registered in the field of cooperation within the ILO, where different trends objectively agreed on many matters up for debate within the Workers' Group. A good example of the positive results of this cooperation are the *European trade union conferences* held in 1976, 1977, 1979 and 1981, with the participation of the entire trade union movement in Europe, without exception, for the very first time since 1949. Also noteworthy are the *World Trade Union Conference against Apartheid*, organized within the framework of the ILO in 1972, 1977 and 1983. On January 20, 1977 the three world centres agreed to stage a *World Day of Solidarity with the Workers of Southern Africa*, which actually proved that united action is possible. Also solidarity with the workers struggling against fascist dictatorships such as in Chile and Uruguay, gave rise to a broader unity of criteria within the Workers' Group. On the initiative of the trade union movement in 1976, the ILO organized a Tripartite Conference on Employment, adopting a Programme of Action for the struggle against one of the worst scourges of our time — unemployment.

The UN was also showing signs of progress in its keener interest in workers' aspirations. As from 1975, the idea of regular meetings between the UN Secretary-General and the three world trade union centres was adopted. When 1975 was declared *International Women's Year*, various demonstrations were staged with the participation of the trade union movement.

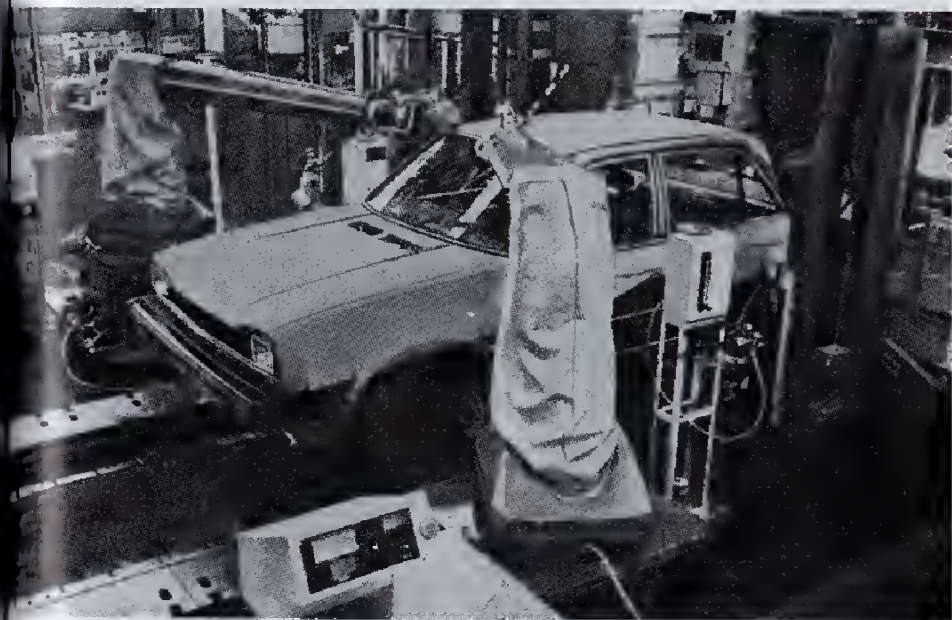
The WFTU continued to pursue its detailed analysis of the social and economic situation of the workers and the tasks of the trade unions: we have already mentioned the Special Session of the Bureau in January 1975; shortly beforehand, in 1974, the Bureau decided to set up an *International Consultative Committee on Economic and Social Problems*, open to the participation of non-member organizations. In 1976, the *Commission on the Activities of TNCs* was set up.

On the 30th anniversary of the WFTU, the General



Picture dedicated by Pablo Picasso to the 10th anniversary of the WFTU. mosaic installed in the WFTU headquarters in Prague, in 1979, by S. Baldini.





The struggle for peace and disarmament concerns all workers and trade unions, without distinction.

Hunger — a challenge of our time.

The development of technology — good or misfortune for mankind?





Towards a better world.





The defence and extension of trade union rights is a fundamental aspiration.



The tremendous value of international solidarity.





Sandor Gaspar,  
WFTU President.



Ibrahim Zakaria,  
WFTU General Secretary.



The 10th World Trade Union Congress, Havana, 1982.

Council met in Paris, its birthplace (7-9 October 1975), with the participation of various non-affiliated organizations. The Resolution adopted on this anniversary said, amongst other things:

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*"... The creation of the WFTU saw the hopes of millions of workers the world over realized on the strength of unity as a powerful instrument, capable of containing the forces of war, reaction and exploitation ... At a time when the aggressiveness of imperialism still prevails in several parts of the world with the survival of fascist and racist regimes in several countries, in order to struggle against the consequences of the crisis of the capitalist system and the policies of states which try to make the working people bear the backlash of such policies, the realization of a united front of workers throughout the world is an absolute necessity in the face of agreements of a monopolist character between different states in order to confront the multinational companies and their policies of worldwide exploitation.*

Under such circumstances, preparations for the 9th World Trade Union Congress, in April 1978 in Prague, were of special importance. How could this wealth of united experience be transformed into a vast movement of renewal, able to overcome the resistance of divisionary forces and convert the trade union movement into an effective vehicle for workers' struggles?

The 9th WTUC, with 1,000 delegates from over 300 organizations from 126 countries, most of whom were not WFTU members, was the largest trade union forum ever to be organized. When the main documents were being drafted, various non-affiliated organizations were involved in discussions. In the centre of this broad dialogue were the questions of unity and international solidarity, the role of the WFTU, its concept and methods. The outcome of the discussion was reflected in the main documents: *«The Policy and Action Document»* and the *Universal Declaration of*



98 *Trade Union Rights*», the latter being unique in its kind.

The first document traced the positive evolution in the world since the 8th WTUC, pointing out the intensification of workers' struggles as an «important sign of today». From this experience were extracted points of common interest for all trade unions and specific proposals for united action were advanced:

*"Widen and consolidate the fight for peace and the process of detente, develop cooperation amongst peoples and as a result impose disarmament."*

*"Satisfy the economic and social demands of the workers."*

*"Assure the economic and political independence of all peoples. Conquer underdevelopment. Build a new, just, international economic order."*

*"Eliminate colonialism, fascism and racism once and for all."*

*"Establish economic and political democracy and the full development of workers' rights."*

In what way were these five priority tasks, common to all, to be carried out?

The document underlines the new elements of international solidarity, conceived with a global indivisible and permanent character, the role of united action and improving the work of the WFTU itself:

*"In all the spheres, results have been achieved but they do not entirely satisfy the WFTU. Therefore they should be consolidated and extended. In order to do this, the WFTU will take every necessary initiative to strengthen and further improve its activities everywhere and any time the workers' interests are at stake. This process will be made all the easier if the WFTU itself can integrate into its own objectives, methods, composition and structure all the changes and possibilities involved in the present situation."*

Of course, the search for new methods which characterized this period was not always easy. Amongst the member organizations, various different points of view also emerged. During the 9th WTUC, the CGIL of Italy decided to quit the ranks of the WFTU as it was convinced that the international trade union structures in general were out of date.

This time, the CGT of France, expressing reservations on some aspects of WFTU policy, did not submit a candidate for the post of general secretary which it had occupied since the foundation of the WFTU. It did, however, continue to participate actively in the work of the WFTU, as a member of the Bureau and other leading bodies and commissions. Consequently, *Enrique Pastorino* was elected as the new general secretary, who, until then, had been president. He was assisted by *Ibrahim Zakaria* as deputy general secretary. *Sandor Gaspar*, general secretary of the Hungarian Council of Trade Unions, the SZOT, was elected president.

#### FRESH EFFORTS

After the 9th WTUC, the central task became the implementation of its guidelines and strengthening the organization from within, taking into consideration the increasing internal diversity of opinions on a range of matters.

Meanwhile the workers were continuing their struggle actions for their immediate and long-term demands and to defend and implement their trade union rights. Amongst many examples, we could cite the fall of the dictatorships in Nicaragua and Iran in 1979, the actions of French dock workers that same year, the Week of Action against Unemployment organized by the ETUC from 24-30 November 1979, the strike of 100,000 British steelworkers in 1980, the same year the strike of steelworkers in the FRG, the «El Teniente» miners in Chile, metalworkers in south Korea, textile workers in Durban, South Africa, followed in 1981 by the actions of South African metalworkers, US air traffic controllers...

In 1980, on the initiative of a range of organizations, members of one of the three internationals or independent, a broad *World Trade Union Conference on Development* was held in Belgrade; only the ICFTU was absent, insisting on not being «contaminated» through contacts with organizations which do not share its views.

The 1980s were declared by the UN as the *2nd Disarmament Decade* and the *3rd UN Development Decade*.

The WFTU continued to extend its solidarity in various different ways. Questions of development, unemployment and education were at the centre of concerns during statutory meetings and in the activities of the different commissions.

Internal organizations became stronger through a general review of the *Constitution*. Here we must pause in our narrative, for a brief explanation of the development of the WFTU's Constitution.

In actual fact, various amendments to the text of the Constitution adopted in Paris in 1945, which we have mentioned in the course of this brief history, should not be seen as a result of imperfections, but rather these changes *have respected and conserved the essential conclusions of the London and Paris World Trade Union Conferences*, which defined the WFTU as a united, class-based, independent, universal and mass organization of workers worldwide.

Nevertheless, it is quite natural that the Constitution, as an instrument which fixes the activities of an organization's daily work, must keep pace with the development of the trade union movement itself.

If we look at the different changes, we can see that they were inspired by constant efforts to:

- ensure equal rights within the WFTU for all member organizations, regardless of their size;
- increase the independence of these organizations in implementing jointly-agreed guidelines;
- develop the autonomy of the TUIs within the organization;

— achieve a greater sphere of action and be more flexible in relations with national and regional organizations, develop cooperation with non-affiliates;

— simplify the internal structure to make it more operational.

The changes, in accordance with the guidelines of the 9th WTUC, summarize these efforts in an attempt to adapt the WFTU to the constantly changing trade union life.

More efforts to reflect the full diversity of the contemporary trade union movement in the fundamental guidelines and principles of its composition. Representation on the General Council, on equal footing, of all affiliated and associate organizations and with the TUIs. Enforce the principle that the World Trade Union Congress is open to all, without having to belong to the WFTU. Broad autonomy of the TUIs, giving them an opportunity to be elected as representatives in the Bureau. (\*)

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The 31st session of the General Council held in Moscow (October 1980) coincided with the 35th anniversary of the foundation of the WFTU. Apart from adopting the revised text of the Constitution, it began preparations for the *10th World Trade Union Congress*. Accepting an invitation from the Cuban Workers' Centre (CTC) for the first time this high-level international trade union forum was held outside Europe, in Havana, from 10-15 February 1982.

At that time, the General Secretary *Enrique Pastorino* had to leave for health reasons. His permanent tasks were taken over by *Ibrahim Zakaria* as interim General Secretary.

The Havana Congress was held during a decisive stage in

(\*) For further details please refer to the full text of the current Constitution in the appendices of this publication.



102 the struggle of the workers and all the progressive forces of mankind against the accentuated bellicose attitude of the Reagan Administration, a further rise in international tension and another slump in the crisis of the capitalist system. The WFTU made its position quite clear on the most important contemporary topics and its responsibility towards the future through a declaration initiated by the General Council in Moscow and adopted in its final form by the session in Budapest in July 1981.

This Document translated the sincere desire to re-vitalize the WFTU and was used as a basis to draft the documents for the 10th World Trade Union Congress.

The workers were facing serious problems and demanding solutions. They expected an active response from the trade union movement to the great challenges of our time. So it is quite natural that the Havana Congress attracted the keen attention of broad sectors of the trade union movement, which was to be seen in the attendance list: 810 delegates from 328 organizations in 138 countries and 23 international and regional trade union organizations representing a total of 269 million workers; the majority, 214 organizations, were not affiliated to the WFTU or to the TUIs, many being members of the ICFTU and WCL. The WCL also sent an observer, so too did its regional organization, the Latin American Workers' Centre (CLAT) for the very first time.

Such diversity was not however an obstacle to broad and constructive debates which led to common conclusions. In general, participants applauded the Congress for its broad, democratic and precise work.

The main document entitled *«The Trade Unions and the Challenges of the 1980s»* highlighted the tremendous contradictions in today's world and prospects for solutions to match the interests of the workers. Here are some examples:

*“On the threshold of the eighties, mankind is faced with problems of unusual dimension. Problems which must be*

*solved in a progressive way, that is by bearing in mind life itself, the needs and aspirations of billions of men and women — the workers — who are the future of mankind. The WFTU must take a serious look at these present-day realities and at the future. The whole world trade union movement has this responsibility as well. In the world today, the trade unions, especially if united, represent a great social force and can carry considerable weight in the solution of the big challenges of this period. The 10th World Trade Union Congress has the ambition to bring original, specific and positive answers to these challenges...”*

*“... The struggles of peoples, workers and trade unions are determining factors in progress towards a better world. These struggles are the struggles of our time, of the 1980s. Although they are rooted in the past and reflect the past in certain aspects of their nature and content, they take on a new sharpness and quality in the context of the present and future. The scope and nature of the problems to be solved, the crisis which can be compared to no other, the balance of forces in the world and the maturity already reached by the workers and people mean that what is at stake today is not comparable with anything in the past...”*

*“... Our concept of solidarity has a class basis. On the one hand are to be found the forces of big business, imperialism and other reactionary forces and all those who continue to support the old order with their policy of aggression, expansion and hegemony in international relations, who persist in maintaining their oppression and who are a brake on the development of society and, on the other, the immense forces of progress and peace. Of course, the latter are varied; they have their own special features, they differ from one another, even disagree. But all their struggles are convergent. They are concerned with responding to contemporary challenges in the interests of the workers...”*

*“... More than ever before, imperialism is making attempts to maintain the split in the international trade union movement in order to prevent the development of trade un-*

ion unity of action at international level. This situation will persist. However, this does not prevent points of convergence being established for the solution of the big problems of the age nor, in consequence, the need for united action by all trade union organizations irrespective of orientation or affiliation as well as by the international and regional trade union organizations..”

“... Today, although hundreds of millions of people are still under a state of domination, it must be clearly seen that the aspiration to freedom, active participation and democracy has become a genuine, tangible force. Millions of exploited people no longer accept the lives accepted by their elders. Democracy has become a great need of our age. It has become a necessity. The scope and complexity of our goals and the problems to be solved mean that the workers, with all their mass strength, must play a conscious part in the whole evolution of the world...”

“... Throughout its long history the WFTU has played an important role in helping the workers in their daily battle and for the development of international solidarity. Today, in order to continue in this tradition, it must take into consideration the evolution of the world which offers new possibilities and poses new demands.”

The Congress also up-dated the *Charter on Social Security* the first version of which dates back to the 5th WTUC (1961).

It then elected a new leadership. *Sandor Gaspar* was re-elected as President; *Ibrahim Zakaria* was confirmed as General Secretary. Six Vice-Presidents were elected, one from each region in the world; *Indrajit Gupta* (India), *Elias Habre* (Lebanon), *Karel Hoffmann* (Czechoslovakia), *Andreas Ziartides* (Cyprus), *Roberto Veiga* (Cuba) and *Romain Vilon Guezo* (Benin). The general secretaries of the Metal, Textile and Transport TUIs were elected as Bureau members.

The Havana Congress was also an opportunity to become

better acquainted with the revolutionary experiences and achievements of the Cuban people. We were honoured with the presence of President Fidel Castro in the opening and closing sessions, his address was tremendously valuable contribution to our work. The Congress examined the circumstances of the Latin American trade union movement in particular, with the help of a co-report presented by *Roberto Veiga*, General Secretary of the CTC.

As was noted by the 28th session of the WFTU Bureau (Prague, 29-30 September 1982):

“The 10th Congress showed that:

— an overwhelming majority of trade union forces the world over agree with our policy and basic approach to problems;

— developments in recent years have re-emphasized the role and importance of world trade union united actions and the specific role of the WFTU in promoting this (in contrast with the doubts expressed by some at the 9th Congress on the need for a world trade union body itself;

— the scope of international trade union united action should be understood and defined concretely, in order to take advantage of the growing willingness of national contingents of the trade union movement to coordinate actions on the principal problems facing mankind.”(\*)

(\*) From the report to the session by the General Secretary *Ibrahim Zakaria*.



## VII Present tasks and perspectives

We could have rounded off narrative of the past in the last chapter of our history. What follows now are the present-day concerns of the WFTU and their projection into the future.

The ten congresses held to date were all held at decisive stages in the development of the WFTU and had strong repercussions on the whole of the world trade union movement. At almost every congress membership has increased, so has representativity. Each time more and more non-member organizations participate in our congresses. Each and every congress has been a fresh opportunity to broaden the overall scope of the WFTU and beyond a shadow of doubt has served to mobilize the broad working masses throughout the world for fresh victories.

The development of events following the 10th WTUC in Havana also confirm their major appraisals: The most aggressive forces of imperialism headed by the

Reagan administration and the military-industrial complex which runs the United States, have enormously aggravated international tension, attacking the gains of detente and imposing a policy of confrontation which has dragged the world to the brink of nuclear catastrophe with unimaginable consequences for the whole of humanity. This is being reflected in the accelerated pace of the arms race, the stationing in Western Europe of new medium-range nuclear missiles and the interventionist policy in the affairs of other nations and provocation against those who have a different concept of the world, primarily against the socialist countries. Humanity is faced with unprecedented mortal danger. At the time of writing, these very same imperialist forces are trying to impose a fresh escalation in the mad-cap arms race into outer space and are hatching armed intervention plans in various areas of the world, such as Central America, the Middle East and the Gulf.

Backed by this bellicose policy, the transnational corporations have stepped up their plunder of the peoples' national wealth and have continued to shift the burden of the capitalist crisis onto the shoulders of the workers and peoples while, at the same time, increasing their fabulous profits. Unemployment, foreign debts, hunger and poverty are being accompanied by a whole series of obstacles in the path of the establishment of a new international economic order.

Reactionary forces, primarily the fascist and repressive regimes of all kinds, are the main defenders of this criminal policy. At the same time, however, there is a rising tide of opposition, increasing the difficulties imperialism has in implementing its plans for aggression right to their final consequences. In South America, democracy is appearing after the tragic decade of military dictatorships in the '70s: Despite all the threats, destabilization campaigns and aggression from the outside, the revolutionary processes are advancing in Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Angola and other countries. Israeli troops have been forced to withdraw from the greater part of

108 Lebanese territory. Negotiations on disarmament which were broken off in 1983, resumed in 1985.

These are all victories which confirm the efficiency of international solidarity.

Despite its size, it is possible to hold and throw back the imperialist counter-offensive. To do this, there is a vital need for the unity of all democratic and peace-loving forces round the world.

The inter-dependence of events occurring throughout the world is today more blatant than ever before. In this respect, Indira Gandhi pointed out on opening the 7th Summit of Non-Aligned Countries on March 7th, 1983 (and here we pay homage posthumously to the great public figure of India and the world whose cowardly assassination aroused such outrage among all progressive forces around the world):

*"Humankind is tottering on the brink of the collapse of the world economic system and annihilation through nuclear war. Should these tragedies occur, can any one of us, large, small, rich or poor, from north or south, west or east, hope to escape? Let us analyse the economic crisis. We of the developing world have no margin of safety. We shall be the first and worst to suffer in any economic breakdown. In this interdependent world, where you cannot 'pick a flower without troubling a star', even the most affluent are not immune to such disturbances."*

#### THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

The trade union movement has now become an immense social force. It has in its ranks some 340 million workers, while the total number of wage-earning workers in the world is estimated at 780 million. What an incredible growth compared to its modest origins described in Chapter 1! In the socialist part of the world, the trade unions play a specific role in the building of a new society, without exploiters or explo-

ited. In the capitalist countries, they are developing intense struggles for their rights, first of all for the essential right to work and live in dignity. In the developing countries, they are uniting their decisive forces in the national struggle for independent development. Altogether, they have a decisive role to play within humanity and its road towards progress. They all have common interests in the key-issues of our time.

First and foremost, we need to avoid a nuclear catastrophe and ensure peace and cooperation among all nations, disarmament and conversion of war industry to release resources for development and the settlement of serious social problems. Today this topic, until quite recently considered by some trade union circles as «political» and therefore alien to the concerns of the trade unions, now appears in the debates and actions of the most varied organizations. In 1982, the «International Trade Union Committee for Peace and Disarmament» (better known as the «Dublin Committee») was created. The issue of peace and disarmament was included on the agenda of the ICFTU Congress held in Oslo in 1983. The WCL Congress in 1981 also declared that the struggle for peace is "the necessary precondition for the attainment of justice, freedom, cooperation, development and solidarity".

On September 30th, 1983, the representatives of the trade union centres in the European socialist countries met in Berlin and adopted an urgent Appeal. The following is an extract from this:

*"The peoples and workers of Europe are faced with a dilemma; we are convinced that they can only choose unity and struggle to save Europe and the world from a nuclear catastrophe. Although we live in countries with different social systems, we have common interests. Europe must become a continent of peace and cooperation for the well-being of the peoples. Peace can be preserved and safeguarded if we devote all our efforts to this cause."*



The relation between disarmament and the issues of jobs and development is becoming increasingly clear for all. Trade unions all over the world are aware of the huge wastage of resources involved in the arms race, to the detriment of urgent development needs. Compare for example, the multi-million dollar wastage on military spending for one year, with the total foreign debt of the developing countries, estimated in 1984 to stand at 800,000 million dollars. The Dublin Committee has calculated that each increase of 1,000 million dollars in US-USSR foreign trade would create 87,000 new jobs in the USA.

The fact is that the workers in the capitalist countries are faced with a deliberate policy of mass unemployment, public spending cuts and falling purchasing power. This is the reason behind the workers' courageous struggles, which have recently become harsher and longer. A prime example was the strike by the British miners, which began in March 1984, against the plan for pit closures. As indicated in the Report on the Problems of Unemployment to the 35th session of the WFTU General Council held in Nicosia, Cyprus (13-15 April 1983):

*"Capitalist policy of maximizing profits irrespective of its social cost continues to dominate even in this period of acute crisis and, in fact, unemployment and the crisis are being used by the monopolies and transnational corporations to attack the workers and trade unions with greater force. Along with the working class, small and medium enterprises and non-monopoly sectors suffer from the ferocity of these attacks. The situation demands an effective organization of a fight-back by the working class and its democratic allies. Depriving people of the right to work means depriving people of the means to earn a living and is a crime against mankind."*

So is there no alternative? In the Resolution adopted on this occasion by the General Council, the WFTU proposed:

— wage increases to boost sales of consumer goods and induce investment in the production of consumer goods;

— reduction of the working week without loss of wages, the introduction of early retirement with a fixed pension, the abolition of child labour, making more jobs available for the unemployed;

— relaunching of ailing industries and urging governments and employers to take the necessary steps to boost production, taking into account workers' interests;

— when jobs are cut due to the introduction of new technology, workers should be given the chance for re-training or further in-service training courses to enable them to adapt to new technology, which should be suited to workers' needs and gradually eliminate tedious jobs which put health at risk;

— increase social investment, in particular housing, medical care, education, cultural and sports amenities which, in addition to creating more jobs, would invigorate other sectors of the economy;

— the establishment of democratic control, with equal participation of trade unions, over key sectors of the national economy, in particular energy and pharmaceutical industries and banks. The destructive activities of the TNCs should be curtailed and constructive activities should be directed towards social development. The methods and forms which these changes should assume should be freely determined and exercised by individual countries and could involve nationalization by democratic means;

— the development of genuine, democratic agrarian reform in accordance with the demands of each country's agricultural workers, primarily aimed at meeting the population's need for foodstuffs;

— taking steps to convert the war industry to civilian industry as part of disarmament policy. It has been proved that conversion is not only a means of safeguarding peace,

but also one of creating jobs, especially due to the effect of increased investment in non-military industries;

- diversify international economic relations and develop scientific, cultural and economic exchanges between countries, irrespective of socio-economic systems. This would be firm ground for maintaining and creating jobs;

- application of a coherent policy of investment to create employment by drafting employment programmes in each sector of the national economy with trade union participation;

- trade union and workers' participation in the determination and implementation of the above measures and workers' participation in industrial management to promote efficient supervision of working methods, investment, the selection of development priorities and the social and financial policies of industry;

- an extension of trade union rights and freedoms, new rights for workers and trade unions in management and industrial and economic activities."

As regards development issues, the WFTU stated the following in its Memorandum to the 6th United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Belgrade, in June 1983:

*"The present growth crisis in the western industrialized nations is not because there are inadequate resources for investment; in fact, the transnational corporations and banks have never enjoyed such abundant liquidity. The problem is essentially that of a decline in purchasing power, brought about by the diversion of resources to anti-social investment such as the arms race and as a result of official policies designed to enrich and boost the profits of private capital and to depress the standard of living of the working people. For example, the official policy in the USA of high interest rates, trade barriers against European industries, embargo on East-West trade, tariff barriers*

*ers against imports from the developing countries, etc., have a direct impact on employment in several countries."*

And also:

*"Militarism has become the main impediment to development in many countries by:*

- *impeding industrialization (because imports of arms have replaced imports of industrial equipment);*

- *impeding social and cultural development (because of the diversion of funds to the army and repressive bodies and therefore lack of funds to build schools, recruit teachers, train technicians, etc.);*

- *conserving hunger and malnutrition (again because of a diversion of resources to military purposes);*

- *causing high rates of inflation and a fall in real wage standards;*

- *obstructing democratic processes and people's participation in development (because of policies of military dictatorships);*

- *obstructing the independent economic development of countries because of the military pressure by imperialism and neo-colonialism on the developing countries.*

*In short, these are the consequences of the attempts to impose a NEW MILITARY ORDER and not a New International ECONOMIC Order."*

Development issues were also broadly debated during the 36th session of the WFTU General Council in Sofia in October 1984. This was preceded by the Round-Table held the same year in April/May in Berlin (GDR), to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order. In the Resolution adopted by the General Council it was noted that:

*"The present crisis in international economic relations underlines the fact that imperialism cannot provide solutions*



*to the acute social and economic problems facing humanity. The solution of these problems is a matter of concern to all workers in the world and calls for their united actions to implement the democratic alternative which serves the interests of the working people. Hence the need arises to promote struggle to overcome internal obstacles created by monopolies and vested interests at national level with a view to the creation of democratic economic and social structures and contribute to the establishment of a New International Economic Order at global level. Life has repeatedly shown that a New International Economic Order makes it imperative to strengthen the struggle for the defence of national independence and sovereignty and against domination and interference by imperialism. The establishment of a New International Economic Order concerns equally the workers and trade unions of all countries and this cannot be left to governments alone. The workers and trade unions, through united action and international solidarity, must mobilize effectively to achieve real progress in this regard. The experience of socialist countries shows that through methods of long-term planning with the participation of the working people and their organizations, it is entirely possible to find solutions to such problems as full employment, a fast rate of economic growth and also justly sharing the fruits of development. The trade and economic relations between the socialist countries and developing countries based on the principles of equality and mutual benefit demonstrate that it is entirely possible to establish a new type of relations as envisaged in the UN Declaration for a New International Economic Order."*

This broad debate was followed by regional initiatives such as the *Asia and Oceania Trade Union Conference on Development* held in New Delhi in February 1985, and similar projects under negotiation with various trade union organizations in Latin America, Africa and the Arab coun-

tries. The WFTU has given new stimulus to its regional activities; in Europe there has been the creation of a European Commission among member organizations on the European continent.

The trade union movement has, for quite some time now, known who are the primary enemies blocking the proposed settlements, i.e. the transnational corporations. The 30th session of the WFTU Bureau in Damascus, Syria (October 1983), dealt with this matter in depth. The WFTU's Transnationals Commission is developing intense activity, particularly regarding stimulus to coordination and international solidarity among workers belonging to the same company. The TUs have a specific role to play in this field.

#### THE ESSENTIAL TASKS OF INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Solidarity has been the essence of the trade union movement since the very beginning. Today, the need is more urgent due to mounting imperialist aggressivity and the TNCs, attacks on workers' rights, armed aggression and many types of provocation against the peoples. The WFTU has always considered its mission to be this essential development of international solidarity. The events following the 10th WTUC, of extreme seriousness for the interests of the workers and peoples, also marked the action of the WFTU in this field:

The British colonial war, with the backing of the US, to regain the Malvinas (Falklands Islands) gave rise, in 1982, to a vast campaign of solidarity with the workers and people of Argentina. The WFTU has always organized international solidarity and constantly denounced the criminal intervention of Israel in Lebanon, the atrocities perpetrated against the Lebanese and Palestinian civilian populations, and threats made against Syria and Libya. In the same way, solidarity with the workers and people of South Africa reached a new peak when in June 1983, the 3rd International Trade

116 Union Conference against Apartheid was organized in the framework of the ILO.

A continual cause for concern has been the threats and aggression to which the people of Nicaragua are victims and the plans to step up US intervention in Central America and the Caribbean. In 1983, the world was outraged by the cowardly US aggression against Grenada. The WFTU took an active part in organizing international solidarity and in actions for peace in Central America, refelected in the two international conferences held in Managua and Lisbon, in 1983.

Continuous and intense solidarity has been expressed with the victims of repression in Chile, Uruguay, Turkey, South Korea, Pakistan and other countries, along with campaigns of material aid in cases of natural disasters such as the recent drought in Ethiopia.

A specific ground for solidarity has also been, with the help of trade union organizations, education, a field in which the WFTU has deployed important efforts in cooperation with national affiliated centres and through contracts with the ILO and UNESCO.

Solidarity with special categories such as youth and women is the subject of a great deal of attention in special committees which have organized large events of an international or regional nature.

The long and arduous struggle of the British miners against the intransigence of the Conservative government gave rise to a vast movement of international solidarity, within which the WFTU and the Mining and Energy Workers' TUI played a decisive part. The National Union of Mineworkers of Great Britain was particularly touched to receive solidarity from the fighting workers in Lebanon and El Salvador.

The interdependence of world events, as indicated earlier, has also increased the awareness of the masses of the imperative need to increase international solidarity.

## UNITY AND UNITED ACTION; MORE VITAL THAN EVER

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All matters referred to here — and many more besides — have stressed the need for unity and united action amongst the trade unions. Today it is wrong to think that such matters may be settled in isolation. The division imposed upon the trade union movement in 1949 is at the origin of the set-up today, whereby there are three different international trends — the ICFTU, the WCL and the WFTU. The WFTU is aware that fundamental differences between the three will persist for a while yet; nevertheless, it is also convinced that united action is possible around many questions upon which we agree, which will create more favourable ground for workers' struggles.

Unfortunately, the leadership of the other two international centres obstinately close their eyes to the changes which have occurred in the labour world. In addition to the policy of restrictions of the ICFTU, came the WCL's decision, in 1982, to break off the traditional meetings with the WFTU, claiming the existence of «fundamental differences» between both organizations on a whole range of matters.

To show the irrelevancy of such an «argument» it is interesting to note the words of WFTU General Secretary, Ibrahim Zakaria, in a letter written to his counterpart at the WCL, Jan Kulakowski:

*“... When we started these meetings a number of years ago, it was clear for both of us that we hold different views on a number of issues both of political and trade union character. This is quite evident. Otherwise we would not have been two different organizations. While recognizing this fact, we have been, and I think in this we have been working in conformity with the will of the millions of workers we represent, trying to identify the areas where we have things in common and to promote some common ac-*



tions. This formula worked and in our opinion worked well. Even when we discussed issues on which we disagree, our common task was to try to explain to one another our respective stands and this brought about a great degree of understanding and mutual respect."

"We regret the decision of your Confederal Committee and hope that soon we will be able to resume the kind of relations we had in the past. We believe that such relations, not only between the WFTU and the WCL but, as indicated by the 10th World Trade Union Congress in Havana (and that was not only a Congress of the WFTU), between trade union organizations of all affiliations, are needed now more than ever before to face the great challenges of our time. The WFTU once more affirms its readiness to cooperate with any other trade union centre without preconditions whatsoever as long as this cooperation leads to serve the interests of the workers we represent.!(\*)

The negative attitude of the leadership of these organizations obviously affects the struggles of the workers around the world, preventing them from being efficient. But the greatest irony is that today, in reality, awareness in increasing in all areas of the need for united action amongst all organizations of different affiliation, including amongst the ranks of the ICFTU and the WCL. Autonomous organizations also support efforts for unity. So what are the obstacles?

The WFTU Bureau, meeting in April 1984 in Paris, the birthplace of our world centre, devoted a great deal of discussions to the current problems of developing unity within the trade union movement. It adopted an important document in this respect. Below we publish the full text of this as, to a certain extent, it sums up the WFTU's efforts towards unity — its main vocation:

(\*) The letter was dated April 27, 1982 and these extracts are published for the first time here.

"The 31st session of the WFTU Bureau, held in Paris from 9-11 April 1984, devoted an important part of its work to studying present problems of the development of unity.

This is not a new concern. It is inscribed in the events of the WFTU's entire history since its foundation which, in itself, was the result of a profound desire for unity of the workers who, during the last world war and after it had ended, wanted to give themselves a means of joining together and taking action to stop such disasters ever happening again in the future. The 10th World Trade Union Congress was fully involved in this passionate search.

However, we are returning to this again today because there are serious and important reasons motivating our insistence and this solemn appeal which the WFTU is addressing to all workers and the world trade union movement as a whole.

We believe strongly that the determination of the workers and peoples will be capable of expressing itself with sufficient amplitude in order to solve the huge problems faced by humanity. But in order to achieve this there must be:

— unity and united action by the workers and their trade union organizations.

This is the key to the future of humanity.

Particularly worrying are the factors challenging us today. No worker, whether woman, man or young person, and no trade union worthy of the name can remain aside.

The responsibility of each and every one is involved.

— The aggressive strategy of imperialism has launched humanity in a frantic arms race, recently aggravated by the installation of the new US missiles in Europe. The stockpiles of armaments would be enough, according to experts, to destroy all life on this planet several times over. Billions and billions, syphoned away from the workers' creative activity, are disappearing into the research and production of weapons designed to kill. While there is so much to be done for life, poverty kills 40,000 children every day;

— millions of workers are deprived of jobs and cannot exercise that fundamental right: the right to work. Their number is increasing unabated;

— millions of people are living, or rather vegetating, below what is termed the «poverty line». Millions of others are suffering and dying because of hunger;

— through exploitation by the transnational companies and imperialism, many countries are being maintained in a state of under-development to such an extent that alienates their independence and sovereignty, prevents them from providing a decent life for their people and confines them to poverty and backwardness;

— fundamental rights and freedoms are being continuously flouted in several countries. Trade union activists are being imprisoned, executed, abducted and are dying under torture.

Workers are struggling against these evils. The means do exist to overcome them. The huge profits of giant capitalist companies and the amounts of money swallowed up by the arms race could usefully serve the well-being of mankind and economic and social development.

We know that throughout the world workers are ardently yearning for unity and are looking for ways to achieve it. When they do achieve it, the results greatly benefit them, be it in their places of work or at national level. This is why the WFTU Bureau is determined to achieve it.

To solve these huge problems we have just dealt with, the WFTU gauges all progress made in this field by the growth in bilateral and multilateral relations between trade union organizations in various countries. These contribute to greater understanding between workers and between peoples and help find agreements for joint actions and work.

This is good, it is encouraging, but it is still not enough to meet the needs of the situation.

So what is it, then, which stands in the way of progress which could be decisive?

Is it the absence of common objectives?

If we look at the programmes of national, regional, continental or world trade union organizations, we can find broad convergences.

It is possible to find agreement among all trade union organizations on such sensitive questions and decisive aims, such as:

— a halt to the arms race and, in particular, the nuclear arms race;

— the creation of the conditions for new international negotiations leading to a balanced reduction of armaments to the lowest possible level, both in East and West;

— the solution by negotiation of all matters of contention between states;

— the establishment of a New International Economic Order encouraging the economic and social development of all countries;

— effective measures to control the activities of transnational corporations;

— the diversion to peaceful ends of the enormous sums earmarked at present for weapons; — the quest for measures to check unemployment and create jobs for all and to improve living conditions.

Of course, there are obstacles in the way of united action towards these goals, but are they insurmountable?

For our part, we are ready to talk about them calmly with everyone, with the intention of understanding and achieving results.

What are the considerations put forward nowadays for holding back, or even preventing dialogue?

It would be difficult to meet or come to an understanding with the WFTU because it is not «independent», they say. Naturally we reject such an argument. The WFTU is made up of sovereign organizations which formulate its trade union policy in an open and sovereign manner. All those who wished to follow the work of our last Congress,



*the composition of which went well beyond the WFTU members, could convince themselves that this is true.*

*It would be difficult to have relations with the trade unions of the socialist countries because, it is argued, "they are not genuine trade unions and, furthermore, are not independent". We could say a lot about the many important rights enjoyed by these unions. But we can point out that all over the world trade unions, although they have many aspects and goals in common, differ from each other. Their history and traditions have modelled them according to the needs of the workers who created and developed them. Some of them have special relationships with this or that party, and not only in the socialist countries. Others maintain that they are independent. We believe that this is the business of the workers of each country and these specific features need not form any obstacle to unity.*

*We must be able to accept each other with all our differences. The trade unions from the socialist countries affiliated to the WFTU are ready to pursue the debate. In their united approach they propose, in particular the holding of an international trade union forum for the discussion of everything related to the life, concepts, activities and prerogatives of the trade unions of the socialist countries.*

*The events in Poland are often raised to justify the refusal of dialogue for joint initiatives. Frankly, we believe that it is not right to make everyone bear what is, above all, the responsibility of the Polish trade unions and which can only be settled by the workers of Poland and their trade unions.*

*It is quite understandable that we have different opinions on this and other questions. But what stops us from discussing them? None of the great problems facing the trade unions of the world today seem insurmountable to us, provided the determination to succeed exists.*

*We at the WFTU want to make even greater efforts. The 10th World Trade Union Congress called us to this continuous search to make the WFTU more active, more*

*effective, simultaneously more flexible and still closer to the workers' realities and aspirations. We have embarked on this road. It is leading us, naturally, to seek unity with even greater fervour and perseverance, with the concern of harmonizing everything possible without intervening in individual trade union affairs.*

*Therefore we are appealing for a sustained effort by everyone, by all international, regional and national trade union organizations. We are appealing to workers in all countries, on all continents, in all trades and in the same transnational company to use all their influence to create the conditions for dialogue and unity of action among all trade unions at all levels."*

#### TOWARDS THE 11th WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS

These, in brief and unquestionably, are the origins and historical developments of the WFTU.

What can be said to conclude?

The creation of the WFTU in 1945 was a unique experience. Up until 1949 it succeeded in bringing together in its ranks practically the entire world trade union movement. To study this experience is of great value for this day and age.

Throughout the split in 1949, the WFTU held aloft the banners of international unity based on class, democracy, universality and mass. Since then it has gone through various periods and has had to confront various difficulties. However, it has never abandoned the ideals of unity and international solidarity of the workers who laid its foundations learning from its own mistakes. One wonders whether the brief and unprecedented unitary experience of 1945-1949 might lead one to thinking of its exceptional nature within the history of the trade union movement, from its origins until the present day. Without doubt, the brutal lessons of war have been decisive to understand the need for unity.

124 Will a similar catastrophe be needed to «open eyes», using the expression of Léon Jouhaux which we quoted at the beginning of Chapter 2?

In today's conditions, this kind of outlook would mean the end of civilized life, over and above the differences that trade union leaders or organizations might cherish. Now is the time to take action.

1986 will mark the centenary of the heroic days of action in Chicago, the forerunners of May 1st, International Workers' Day. The best homage which could be paid to the Chicago Martyrs will be action for unity in every country, every factory and every place of work at national, trade, regional and world levels, a task for us all.

Following a decision by the 36th session of the WFTU Bureau, the *11th World Trade Union Congress will take place in Berlin, capital of the German Democratic Republic, in 1986*. Its main task will be, without a shadow of doubt, to transform the results attained during these years of an untiring quest for united action, into an effective programme for the whole of the world trade union movement.

Like its predecessors, this Congress will also be open to participation from all trade unionists of good will.

The WFTU belongs to them.

15. 4. 1985

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## APPENDICES



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APPENDIX 1

# Constitution of the World Federation of Trade Unions

## I. DEFINITION

As set forth in the declaration of the London World Trade Union Conference in February 1945 and the resolutions and principles adopted by the First World Trade Union Congress in Paris in October 1945, the World Federation of Trade Unions is an international organization of workers organized in trade unions. Its members are trade union organizations which voluntarily agree to unite for more effective mutual solidarity, to discuss and exchange experience and to unite their efforts in the joint defence of common objectives. This community within the WFTU is formed without discrimination, on a basis of equality for all, with respect for the rights, independence and sovereignty of trade union organizations of differing outlooks from all countries of the world, irrespective of their political, philosophical and religious beliefs, the race of their members and the social and economic regimes of their respective countries.

The WFTU fights for the establishment of a world order based on a peaceful community of sovereign nations within which the workers occupy their rightful place in society as the producers of all the material and intellectual wealth of humankind, and on a world in which there is social justice which excludes the possibility of people exploiting and subjugating other people.

The World Federation of Trade Unions retains its complete sovereignty under all circumstances. It decides its programme and actions to be undertaken in defence of the workers' vital interests without any outside interference. As an international organization, and notwithstanding the forms of relations established at national level by member organizations, the WFTU maintains its independence from governments and political parties.

The WFTU — a democratic and mass-based organization for class struggle — focuses its concern and its action on the unity of all workers, the united action of all trade unions and international trade union unity as being the most effective means of ensuring the triumph of the workers' aspirations.

The WFTU works out its programme and orientation and establishes its actions on the basis of consultations between all member organizations, studying the specific experience of each of them and seeking to define the common interests of the workers throughout the world, drawing its inspiration from workers' international solidarity.

## II. OBJECTIVES

The WFTU therefore proclaims its prime objective to be the emancipation of the workers by means of:

a) the struggle against capitalist exploitation and for obtaining and guaranteeing living and working conditions for all workers which would allow them the widest possible benefits from the fruits of their labour, in order to obtain for them and their families the time and the means to live in conditions appropriate to our epoch which is one marked by the headlong progress of science and technology:

- the right to work for all and the guarantee of this right;
- full and adequate social security legislation to protect workers and their families in the event of sickness, accident and old age, and every other type of assistance and social security;

- training, education and culture for all workers, thus enabling them to gain access to any responsibility or position within their capabilities.

b) the struggle against imperialism and for the final elimination of colonialism, neo-colonialism and all forms of fascism and racism, the assurance of the economic and political independence of all peoples, the elimination of under-development and the establishment of a new, just, international economic order.

c) the achievement of economic and political democracy, the development of workers' rights and freedoms, respect for human rights and the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Trade Union Rights.

d) international detente, the establishment of a just and lasting peace, peaceful coexistence amongst all states, cooperation based on equality amongst all peoples, an end to the arms race, especially in nuclear arms, and progressive arms reduction leading to general and complete disarmament.

## III. MEANS

To achieve these objectives, the WFTU:

a) uses every available means to publicize and explain these objectives to the workers of all countries, together with the programmes and decisions adopted by its leading bodies, and the actions for unity which it adopts;

b) makes every effort to organize, inspire and coordinate international solidarity;

- with workers and trade unions, the victims of attacks or repression by employers or governments;



— with workers struggling for the satisfaction of their demands or aspirations;

— with peoples who are struggling for their liberation and independence and against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and all forms of fascism or racism;

— with the workers of the socialist countries who are building a socialist society in conditions where power is in the hands of the workers;

— with workers and peoples who are struggling for the elimination of under-development and with those who have opted for the road to socialism;

e) promotes and encourages all democratic debates and exchanges of opinion and experience both within and outside the organization on problems of common interest for all workers and trade unions of the world with a view to encouraging the broadest possible development of their solidarity and of unity-oriented activities aimed at solving these problems and at the continued consolidation of their unity at all levels;

d) works with and within already existing or possible future international and inter-governmental institutions in order to advance the aspirations and demands of the workers and peoples in accordance with the programmes and decisions adopted by World Trade Union Congresses and by any other leading body of the WFTU;

c) advocates and acts in favour of the achievement of united action by trade union organizations whether national, regional or international, in order to achieve the satisfaction of common demands, and in favour of cooperation with all organizations and progressive forces which are working for all or some of the same aims and objectives as its own;

f) cooperates with trade union organizations concerned in workers' trade union training so as to give an impetus to the role of trade unions in modern economic, social and vocational life, whilst recognizing the different circumstances and the historical development of the trade union movement in each country.

#### IV. METHODS OF WORK

To achieve its objectives the WFTU applies the following principles and working methods:

1/ The WFTU makes constant use of forms of work aimed at unity and cooperation with all national organizations, irrespective of affiliation, in the struggle for common objectives and in a spirit of workers' international solidarity.

2/ The democratic functioning of the organization at all levels requires

consultations and the strict application of collective work in the governing and deliberative bodies laid down in the Constitution, as well as respect for all opinions expressed in the interests of the defence of the workers.

Adherences to the regularity of meetings of the leading bodies and statutory and sovereign assemblies of the WFTU, together with the creation of Working Commissions as decided by the statutory bodies, constitutes one of the forms of the organization's democratic functioning.

3/ The observance of full respect for democratic principles in relations with trade union organizations, based on the recognition of the right of member organizations to draft their policies, programmes and actions independently and in accordance with the interests of the workers of their countries and the specific conditions in which they are working, as well as with specific national circumstances.

4/ Relations between the WFTU and its member organizations and between member organizations within the WFTU or at bilateral level are based on mutual respect, complete equality of rights, reciprocal independence and non-interference in internal affairs.

5/ Relations are also based on the following principles:

a) Consultations in order to seek unanimity in the statutory bodies on all important and fundamental matters.

b) If, after several attempts, unanimity is not possible, decisions are reached by vote in accordance with the provisions contained in the Constitution.

Decisions of the statutory bodies of the WFTU are adopted by a simple majority. A two-thirds majority is required if the issue concerns i) amendments to the WFTU Constitution, ii) the establishment or modification of its Programme of Action, iii) the adoption of its budget.

c) It is necessary to pursue consultations, notwithstanding any possible vote, on questions on which agreement cannot be reached within the bodies concerned or in the supreme body. In all cases, democratic and unity-oriented principles shall be observed, allowing member organizations which have expressed a position or aim different from the others to associate with the life and activities of the WFTU both in spirit and in accordance with the Constitution.

6/ Concerning relations between the WFTU and its member organizations:

a) An organization's membership of the WFTU does not, in any case, entail renunciation of reduction of its independence and national autonomy in the implementation of resolutions or decisions of WFTU statutory bodies.

b) Member organizations will carry out the decisions of the WFTU

statutory bodies taking into account the situation in their respective countries, thus recognizing the right of each organization to take into consideration the specific conditions in which they work.

c) The right is recognized of any member organization not to be bound by any decision, stand or action in the formulation of which it was not involved or with which it did not agree.

7/ The WFTU's relations with associate member organizations, as well as the rights and duties of those organizations, are defined in the present Constitution (see article 14).

8/ The WFTU's relations with non-member organizations are based on fraternal and voluntary cooperation in the constant search for common objectives and the planning of common activities. In this spirit, the WFTU shall seek contact and establish cooperation with the other international trade union organizations, as well as with regional or continental trade union organizations.

## ARTICLE 1

### COMPOSITION

I. The WFTU is open to all genuine trade union organizations which represent and struggle for the workers' interests and accept the present Constitution. They can be either affiliated or associate members.

II. The approval or refusal of an application for membership by a trade union organization is decided in the first instance by the Bureau, subject to ratification by the General Council and the Congress. The decision takes immediate effect. The reasons for any refusal of an application for membership are in every case explained to those concerned. Application for membership of the WFTU may be made directly to the General Council or to the World Trade Union Congress. This application shall be immediately passed on to the Bureau which will follow the procedure stipulated in this paragraph.

III. Trade union organizations which are not WFTU members may be associated with its activities and take part in the discussion of all problems and the adoption of resolutions on the activities with which they are associated. With this aim in view, bilateral agreements of cooperation between such organizations and the WFTU are established.

## ARTICLE 2

### STRUCTURE

The structure of the World Federation of Trade Unions comprises:

- the World Trade Union Congress
- the General Council
- the Bureau
- the Secretariat.

## ARTICLE 3

### WORLD TRADE UNION CONGRESS

I. The World Trade Union Congress is the supreme body of the WFTU. It meets regularly every four years, convened by the General Council, or in extraordinary session also convened by the General Council or at the request of the majority of member organizations.

The functions and powers of the World Trade Union Congress are as follows:

- a) Drafting and adopting the programme and the general policy of the WFTU;
- b) Examining and discussing the reports presented by the General Council and the Auditing Commission;
- c) Examining and discussing supplementary reports presented to the Congress on questions on the agenda;
- d) Modifying or amending the present Constitution; these decisions must be taken by a majority of two thirds of those voting;
- e) Examining any question concerning the admission of any union organization;
- f) Ratifying proposals by member organizations concerning the composition of the General Council and electing the Auditing Commission;
- g) Adopting the agenda and standing orders of the sessions.

II. The World Trade Union Congress is open to all trade union organizations and their participation does not imply their membership of the WFTU.

The Congress has a quorum if the delegates represent at least two-thirds of the total number of member organizations.



### III. The World Trade Union Congress comprises:

a) member delegates representing affiliated and associate organizations whose representation is decided on the following basis:

- up to 100,000 members: 1 delegate;
- more than 100,000 and up to 5,000,000 members: 1 delegate for each additional 250,000 members or majority fraction thereof;
- more than 5,000,000 and up to 10,000,000 members: 1 delegate for each additional 500,000 members or majority fraction thereof;
- more than 10,000,000 and up to 15,000,000 members: 1 delegate for each additional 1,000,000 members or majority fraction thereof;
- more than 15,000,000 members: 1 delegate for each additional 3,000,000 members or majority fraction thereof.

In addition, each affiliated trade union organization is entitled to appoint an additional representative for every 250,000 members or majority fraction thereof up to 1,000,000 members. Such additional representatives are entitled to take part in the Congress discussions but have no right to vote.

b) observer delegate representing invited non-member organizations in a number established by the General Council when it convenes the Congress;

c) delegates from the TUIs;

d) representatives from other international or regional trade union organizations.

The outgoing members — both full and deputy — of the General Council, Bureau, Secretariat and Auditing Commission and the chairpersons of Working Commissions participate in the debates, with consultative status.

All Congress participants, together with special guests, representatives of non-trade union organizations with whom the WFTU cooperates and various important people specially invited by the General Council, may take the floor under the same conditions as laid down by the standing orders of the Congress.

Observer delegates and representatives of international and regional trade union organizations may, if they agree, be elected to the Congress Presidium and take part in the different commissions with the same rights as member delegates, with the exception of the following Commissions:

- Credentials Commission
- Nomination Commission
- Constitution Commission.

Observer delegates may, if they wish, vote on all the Congress documents, except in the following cases:

- adoption of the standing orders and agenda,

- approval or amendment of the WFTU Constitution,
- approval or ratification of new members,
- approval of the Report by the Auditing Commission,
- election of the General Council and Auditing Commission.

IV. Voting at the Congress is by a show of hands, under the principles set forth in the Preamble of the Constitution. The voting procedure shall be as follows:

- 1/ prior consultations with the aim of achieving unanimity;
- 2/ if unanimity cannot be obtained, voting shall take place under the conditions stipulated below;
- 3/ decisions become final once they are adopted by the Congress, which is sovereign; however, one or more trade union organizations can propose the reinclusion on the agenda of the next Congress of an item on which unanimity has not been achieved. In any case a two-thirds majority is essential for:

- 1) amendments to the WFTU Constitution;
- 2) the establishment or modification of its programme of action;
- 3) the adoption of its budget.

If two or more organizations demand a card vote; it is taken on the following basis:

- up to 50,000 members: 1 vote
- more than 50,000 and up to 5,000,000 members: 1 for each additional 50,000 members or majority fraction thereof;
- more than 5,000,000 and up to 10,000,000 members: 1 vote for each additional 100,000 members or majority fraction thereof;
- more than 10,000,000 and up to 15,000,000 members: 1 vote for each additional 200,000 members or majority fraction thereof;
- more than 15,000,000 members: 1 vote for each additional 400,000 members or majority fraction thereof.

On a card vote, each affiliated organization casts its vote as a unit, and the delegates from an affiliated organization present are entitled to cast the full vote of their organization notwithstanding the absence of some of their delegates. All decisions of the Congress are adopted by majority vote, except where the Constitution provides otherwise.

V. The President of the WFTU opens the Congress which then elects a Presidium whose task is to direct its work. This remains in office until the Congress closes.

## GENERAL COUNCIL

I. The General Council is the highest statutory body of the WFTU between two Congresses. It meets regularly once a year; otherwise, an extraordinary session may be convened by the Bureau or at the request of a third of its members:

The functions of the General Council are:

- a) to examine reports presented by the Bureau on its activities and to take any action arising from the reports;
- b) to approve the budget and reports given by the Auditing Commission;
- c) to establish plans of work for the WFTU and adopt appropriate measures for carrying out Congress decisions;
- d) to elect the President, Vice-Presidents, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Secretaries;
- f) to define positions and, where necessary, to decide on action on problems affecting the interests of the workers.

II. It consists of one representative for each affiliated organization and each TUI, as well as one representative with consultative status for each associate organization.

General Council members — full members and deputy members — are proposed by their respective organizations and ratified by the World Trade Union Congress. If there should be any changes in the composition of the General Council between two Congresses on the decision of the respective organization or owing to new members joining, the new members are ratified by the General Council itself.

If the Bureau so decides, representatives of other trade union organizations, not members of the WFTU, may be invited to General Council sessions as observers without the right to vote.

Members of the Bureau, Secretariat and Auditing Commission may take part in the discussions.

General Council sessions are chaired by the President or, in his/her absence, by one of the Vice-Presidents of the WFTU.

## BUREAU

The Bureau is the collective leading body of the WFTU between two sessions of the General Council which is the body to lay down the number of Bureau members and to elect its full and deputy members from different continents, members of affiliated organizations or of the TUIs.

Also members of the Bureau are:

- the President of the WFTU,
- the Vice-Presidents of the WFTU,
- the General Secretary,
- the Deputy General Secretary.

Representatives of associate organizations may be elected to the Bureau with consultative status.

The other members of the Secretariat and the Chairman of the Auditing Commission may take part in Bureau discussions.

Members of the Bureau represent the General Council and not any particular geographical region or trade.

Apart from the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary, members of the Bureau must be active members of union organizations at the time of their election.

II. The Bureau directs the activities of the Secretariat in carrying out the decisions, resolutions and orientation of the Congress and the General Council.

It regularly examines reports on the state and use of WFTU funds, and the use of the Solidarity Fund.

If necessary, the Bureau takes any urgent action concerning all questions affecting the interests of the trade union movement. It must submit a report on such action for ratification by the General Council.

III. The Bureau meets regularly twice a year; otherwise an extraordinary session may be convened by the Secretariat in agreement with the President and Vice-Presidents or at the request of a third of the Bureau members. Bureau sessions shall be chaired by the President or, in his/her absence, by one of the Vice-Presidents.



## SECRETARIAT

I. The Secretariat, made up of the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary and Secretaries, is elected by the General Council, bearing in mind the representation of all regions of the world.

It is the permanent executive body of the WFTU. Its principal tasks are the execution and implementation of the programme and decisions adopted by the World Trade Union Congress, the General Council and the Bureau.

It is collectively responsible to the statutory bodies of the WFTU for its daily activities, the functioning of its central apparatus, its financial activity and the organization of the various departments.

The international nature of the tenure of each member of the Secretariat in his/her post frees him, within the Secretariat, from his particular national obligations.

II. In particular the functions of the Secretariat are:

a) examining all urgent questions which arise between meetings of the Bureau and to submit the measures undertaken on these urgent questions to the Bureau for ratification;

b) calling meetings of the Bureau and preparing documents for these meetings as well as for those of the General Council and Congress;

c) maintaining permanent contact with member organizations and the TUIs;

d) taking all necessary measures to collect documentary material on social legislation and various matters of interest to the world trade union movement and to send this information to union organizations;

e) editing WFTU publications;

f) directing the activity of the WFTU apparatus.

III. The work of the Secretariat is directed by the General Secretary, assisted by the Deputy General Secretary. The General Secretary or, in his/her absence, the Deputy General Secretary represents the WFTU in relations with other organizations and institutions.

## AUDITING COMMISSION

The Auditing Commission is made up of a chairperson and four other members, all elected by the World Trade Union Congress from among members of affiliated organizations which are up to date in the payment of their dues.

II. The task of the Auditing Commission is to inspect the accounts of the Federation and to ensure that the finances are managed in accordance with the work plans and other decisions of the statutory bodies.

## BUDGET AND FUNDS

I. The funds of the World Federation of Trade Unions are provided by means of affiliation dues, the amount of which shall be established by the Bureau and ratified by the General Council, in accordance with the principle of a sliding scale on the following basis:

- up to 5,000,000 members: full affiliation dues;
- more than 5,000,000 and up to 10,000,000: 50% of full affiliation dues;
- more than 10,000,000 and up to 15,000,000: 25% of full affiliation dues;
- more than 15,000,000: 12.5% of full affiliation dues.

II. The Bureau has the authority, subject to ratification by the General Council, to permit affiliated trade union organizations to pay a lower quota than that stated above.

III. The Bureau submits to the General Council an annual budget based on the affiliation dues to be collected.

Affiliation dues are paid quarterly and are calculated on the basis of the full membership of each affiliated trade union organization as at the end of the year immediately preceding the Congress or the General Council meeting.

## WORKING COMMISSIONS

I. The General Council, Bureau or Secretariat may decide to set up permanent or temporary Working Commissions to study certain specific subjects or to carry out certain activities.

II. The Working Commissions may also include representatives of non-member organizations. They are of a consultative nature and their conclusions and recommendations are submitted to the body which created them for the adoption of decisions.

## ARTICLE 10

## INFORMATION AND PUBLICATIONS

To maintain regular contact with its member organizations and make its policies, opinions, programmes and initiatives known everywhere, the WFTU employs publications and audio-visual media as decided by the Bureau.

## ARTICLE 11

## HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters of the World Federation of Trade Unions is in Prague.

## ARTICLE 12

## TRADE UNION INTERNATIONALS (TUIs)

I. The TUIs are constituted to cover all industries, trades and occupations. They take part in the activities of the WFTU on the basis of the present Constitution. They are centres for the formulation, coordination and stimulation of international trade union activity at trade level in order to ensure the broadest possible degree

of unity and solidarity in the interest of the workers of their respective branch of industry.

II. The TUIs have their own Constitutions which determine the principles of their sovereignty in every sphere of their activity, policy, composition, leadership and internal administration.

III. The TUIs shall cooperate with the WFTU in implementing the policies which emerge from the World Trade Union Congresses, in the formulation of which they participated, and in organizing the support and solidarity of the entire international trade union movement.

A consultative Conference of TUI Secretariats and the WFTU Secretariat is held each year with the aim of exchanging and enlarging experience gained at trade level and, if necessary, coordinating joint initiatives and actions within their specific fields of competence.

## ARTICLE 13

## REGIONAL TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES

The WFTU has the power to organize and encourage consultations, coordinated activity and exchanges of experience between trade union organizations from regions, sectors and geographical areas where there appear to be common demands and where there are specific conditions which reflect the common interests of the workers.

Trade union organizations in these regions, sectors or areas can, in agreement with the WFTU, choose and decide the methods, forms and means most suitable to them for planning and carrying out regional activities and initiatives designed to advance the workers' struggles.

These trade union organizations can, furthermore, take steps to encourage unity of action and bring about the unity of all the trade union organizations, without any discrimination, in the regions, sectors or geographical areas concerned.



## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

I. Organizations with the status of associate members of the WFTU participate in the World Trade Union Congresses with all the rights enjoyed by organizations with the status of affiliated members.

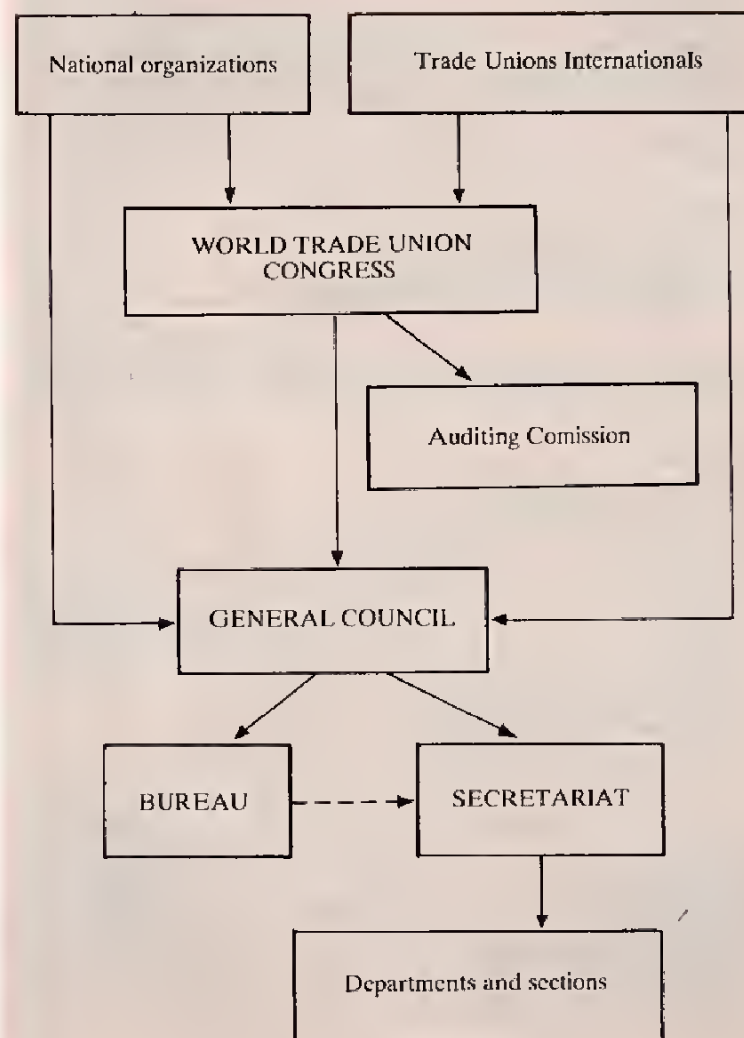
II. Associate organizations are members of the General Council with consultative status.

III. The General Council may decide that organizations with associate member status can become members of the Bureau with consultative status.

IV. Members of organizations with associate status cannot be elected to the office of President, Vice-President, General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary or Secretary of the WFTU.

V. Organizations with associate member status contribute to the funds of the WFTU through membership dues, the amount of which is fixed in agreement between the WFTU and the associate organization concerned.

## WFTU STRUCTURE:



## APPENDIX 2

WORLD TRADE UNION CONFERENCES  
AND CONGRESSES — *Statistical summary**World Trade Union Conference, London, 16-17 February 1945:*

Delegates:	204
National organizations (countries):	38 (85)
International organizations:	15
<i>Total representation: 60 million workers.</i>	

*Conference—1st World Trade Union Congress, Paris, 25 September-8 October 1945:*

Delegates:	346
National organizations (countries):	56 (55)
International organizations:	19
<i>Total representation: 67 million workers.</i>	

*2nd World Trade Union Congress, Milan, 29 June-9 July 1949:*

Delegates:	252
National organizations (countries):	63 (61)
International organizations:	4
<i>Total representation (members): 71 million workers.</i>	

*3rd World Trade Union Congress, Vienna, 10-21 October 1953:*

Delegates:	819
National organizations, total (countries):	253 (79)
Non-members:	207
International organizations:	7
<i>Total representation: 88 million workers, of which 60.6 million members.</i>	

*4th World Trade Union Congress, Leipzig, 4-15 October 1957:*

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Delegates:	806
National organizations, total (countries):	190 (80)
Non-members:	114
International organizations:	7
<i>Total representation: 106 million workers, of which 92 million members.</i>	

*5th World Trade Union Congress, Moscow, 4-15 December 1961:*

Delegates:	958
National organizations, total (countries):	(*) ( 97)
Non-members:	(*)
International organizations:	8
<i>Total representation: 142 million workers, of which 120 million members.</i>	

*6th World Trade Union Congress, Warsaw, 8-22 October 1965:*

Delegates:	527
National organizations, total (countries):	99 (90)
Non-members:	58
International organizations:	8
<i>Total representation: 159 million workers, of which 138 million members.</i>	

*7th World Trade Union Congress, Budapest, 17-26 October 1969:*

Delegates:	461
National organizations, total (countries):	135 (97)
Non-members:	56
International organizations:	13
<i>Total representation: 153 million workers, of which 134 million members.</i>	



Delegates: 574  
 National organizations, total (countries): 180 (93)  
 Non-members: 113  
 International organizations: 13  
*Total representation: 208 million workers, of which 151 million members.*

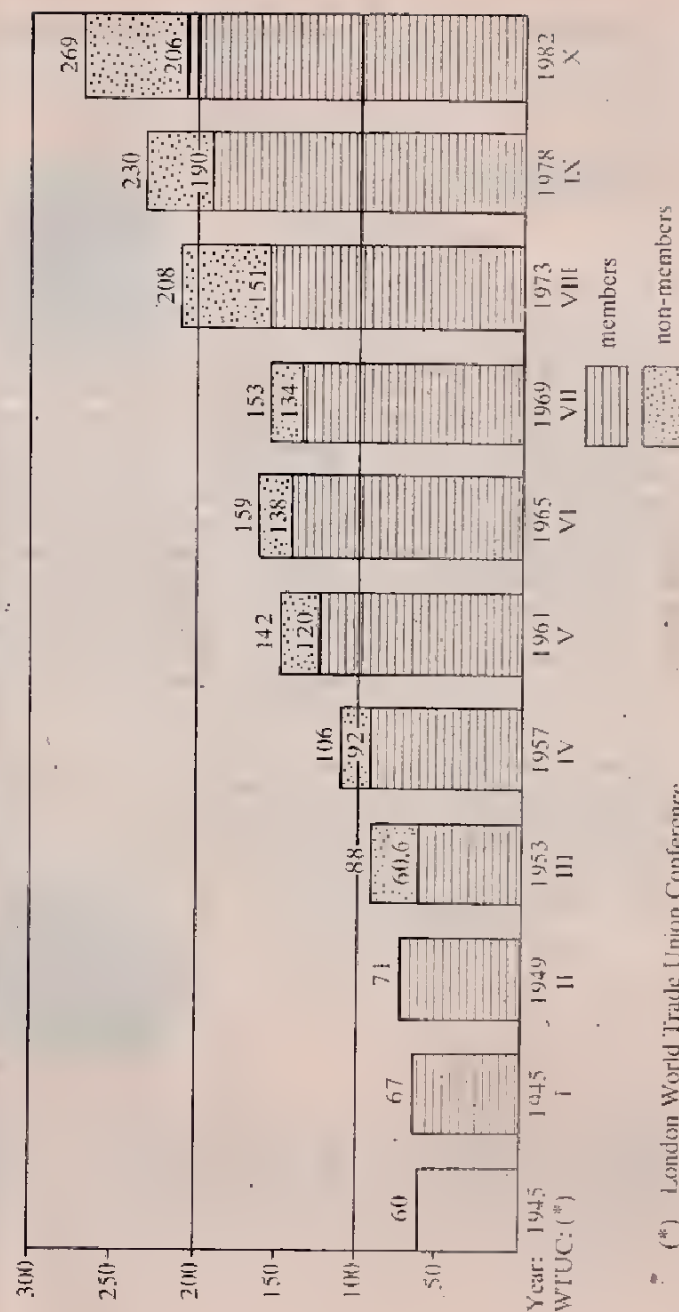
*9th World Trade Union Congress, Prague, 16-22 April 1978:*

Delegates: 996  
 National organizations, total (countries): 303 (126)  
 Non-members: 174  
 International organizations: 20  
*Total representation: 230 million workers, of which 190 million members.*

*10th World Trade Union Congress, Havana, 10-15 February 1982:*

Delegates: 810  
 National organizations, total (countries): 338 (138)  
 Non-members: 229  
 International organizations: 19  
*Total representation: 269 million workers, of which 206 million members.*

COMPARATIVE TABLE FOR GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION  
 IN CONGRESSES (in millions of workers):



## APPENDIX 3

THE TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONALS —  
*a short introduction*

According to the recommendations of the 1945 World Trade Union Conference in London and Paris, the WFTU comprised along with the national centres, international trade union organizations created specifically to cover the various industries and professions, termed «Trade Unions Internationals» (TUIs). The 2nd World Trade Union Congress in Milan, in 1949, outlined how they were to function and defined their place within the WFTU. With time they have become broad international organizations with their own personality, centres for the formulation, coordination and stimulation of trade union action at branch level, in order to assure the highest degree of unity and solidarity in the interests of the workers of their respective fields of work. Any national trade union organization in the particular industry or profession concerned may join a TUI, regardless of membership to a national centre in that field or of that centre's membership to the WFTU. Within the WFTU, the TUIs benefit from the utmost autonomy in the formulation of their policies in their specific field of activities as well in their own day-to-day work, which is governed by their own constitutions. They help formulate the policies of and cooperate with the WFTU in implementing the policies of the World Trade Union Congress which they attend. They play a decisive role in the development of international solidarity, in particular in the struggle against the transnational corporations. Their representatives are members of the General Council and may be elected to the Bureau of the WFTU.

There are at present eleven TUIs: a Standing International Committee, with a consultative status, works in close cooperation with the WFTU:

TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF AGRICULTURAL,  
FORESTRY AND PLANTATION WORKERS  
(AGRICULTURE TUI)

Address: Opletalova 57  
11000 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia  
Telephone: (422) 221938  
*General Secretary:*  
*René Digne (France)*

Founded in 1949, at the Constitutive Conference held in Warsaw, it is today the largest trade union organization in terms of membership within the framework of the WFTU. It comprises 98 organizations from 61 countries, representing 60 million workers. A total of 110 organizations from 71 countries, representing 73 million workers were present at the 9th International Trade Conference, in Warsaw in 1983 (October 3-6). The Agriculture TUI has consultative status at the FAO (United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture). It conducts its activities through four branch commissions: for workers in agriculture, plantations, the forestry branch and peasant workers.

The TUI also publishes a monthly news bulletin.

TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS  
IN THE FOOD, TOBACCO, HOTEL AND ALLIED INDUSTRIES  
(FOOD TUI)

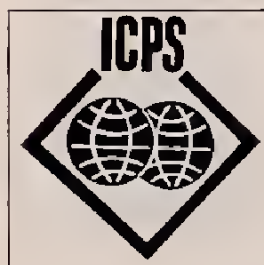
Address: Ul. 6 Septembri 4  
Sofia, Bulgaria  
Telephone: (3592) 880251  
Cable address: UIS MOP (Sofia)  
*General Secretary:*  
*Jose Antonio Marrero (Cuba)*

Founded in 1949, this TUI now comprises 94 organizations from 54 countries, representing 20 million workers. 110 organizations from 78 countries took part in its 7th Trade Conference, held in Moscow in 1983



(September 27-30). 51 of these organizations were not members of the WFTU. Due to the great variety of trades incorporated, there is also a considerable number of branch commissions: sugar industry; meats and fats; milk and milk products; bread and confectionary; tobacco; hotels and restaurants, etc. A mixed Committee has been formed jointly with the Transport TUI to follow the problems of the workers in the fishery industry. The TUI has consultative status with the United Nations Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO). An informal bi-monthly bulletin is published as well as leaflet entitled «News Briefs».

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF CHEMICAL, OIL AND ALLIED WORKERS (CHEMICAL TUI)



Address: Benczur ut.45  
1415 Budapest, Hungary  
Telephone: (361) 428558  
Cable address: INTERCHEMIE (Budapest)  
Telex: 225861  
*General Secretary:*  
*Alain Covey (France)*

Founded in 1950, the Chemical TUI today unites 100 organizations from 50 countries, representing 13 million members. The 9th International Trade Conference, held in Prague from the 16th to 20th May, 1983, was attended by 93 organizations from 59 countries, 33 of which were not members of the TUI. Five commissions carry out its activities in the following fields: chemicals; petroleum; paper; ceramics and glass; rubber. In 1981 the Chemical TUI organized a broad-based International Conference on Transnationals in the Pharmaceutical Industry, in Moscow, as well as an International Trade Union Conference Against Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons, in Ho Chi Minh City, in 1983. It exerts a great deal of effort coordinating the struggles of the workers of transnationals, in particular the RHONE-POULENC Company. It publishes a regular news bulletin, and news sheets.

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS IN COMMERCE (COMMERCE TUI)



Address: Opletalova 57  
110 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia  
Telephone: (422) 220 680  
*General Secretary:*  
*Ilie Frunza (Rumania)*

Founded in 1959, the Commerce TUI now comprises 70 member organizations from 61 countries, representing more than 20 million workers. The 7th International Trade Conference, held in Berlin, GDR (September 19-24, 1984) was attended by 26 non-member national organizations, which raised the number of countries represented to 69. A Standing Committee is responsible for the problems of working women and has organized three international conferences on women's problems which are particularly important in the field of commerce. It publishes a quarterly bulletin and issues a monthly newsletter.

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS OF THE BUILDING, WOOD AND BUILDING MATERIAL INDUSTRIES (BUILDING TUI)



Address: 00101 Helsinki B.P.281, Finland  
Telephone: (3580) 604870  
Cable address: INTERBATIMENT (Helsinki)  
*General Secretary:*  
*Mauri Perä (Finland)*

Founded in Milan in 1949, it consists at present of 73 organizations from 57 countries, with a total of 17 million members. 86 organizations from 64 countries took part in the International Trade Conference held in Sofia in 1983 (11-17 October). It has various trade commissions and

standing working groups: construction; wood; building materials; work safety and health; youth; women; engineers, architects and technicians. It publishes an information bulletin quarterly and news briefs on a fortnightly basis.

#### WORLD FEDERATION OF TEACHERS' UNIONS (FISE)



Address: Wilhelm Wolf Str. 21  
Berlin III, GDR  
Telephone: (372) 4800591  
Telex: 115037 fise dd  
*General Secretary:*  
*Daniel Retureau (France)*

Founded in Paris in July 1946, through the merger of the then-International Professional Secretariat of Education (SPIE) and the ITE, with the participation of the American Education Association, joined the WFTU as its first professional trade union structure. At the present time it consists of 121 organizations from 82 countries, with a total of 20 million members. As the time of writing, its 13th Statutory Conference was scheduled for May 24-29, 1985, in Sofia, Bulgaria. It has a consultative status at UNESCO. Various joint actions have been organized by agreement with the International Federation of Teachers' Unions (IFTU, member of the ICF-TU), the World Federation of Educators (CME, member of the WCL), and the World Federation of Organizations of the Teaching Professions (CMOPE). It publishes a quarterly review «Teachers of the World», with a pedagogical supplement subsidized by UNESCO and a bulletin entitled «Educators' International Courier», which appears eight times a year.

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF PUBLIC AND ALLIED EMPLOYEES (PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TUI)



Address: Französische Str. 47  
108 Berlin, GDR  
Telephone: (372) 2292662  
Cable address: UNSYFO (Berlin)  
*General Secretary:*  
*Hans Lorenz (GDR)*

Founded on October 29, 1949, at the Berlin Conference with the name of International Union of Trade Unions of Postal, Telephone and Telegraph Workers (TUI-PTT), its field of activities was broadened in 1955 to include the workers in public administration, health, finance and public services. It has, at present, 104 member organizations in 44 countries, which represent 29 million workers. At the 7th Congress of the TUI which met in Prague in 1982 (11-15 October), 140 organizations participated, members and non-members, from 69 countries, representing 40 million workers. Five branch commissions function within it: public workers; public services; bank employees; and communications. It publishes a news bulletin, as well as a review «Public Service».

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS IN THE METAL INDUSTRY (METAL TUI)



Address: B.P. 158, Moscow K-9, USSR  
Telephone: 4509085, 4502810, 45094007  
Telex: 411370 activ su  
*General Secretary:*  
*Alain Stern (France)*

Founded on June 21, 1949, at the International Trade Union Conference of Workers of the Metal and Mechanical Industries, in Turin, Italy. Today it represents 22 million organized workers in 58 trade organizations



from 42 countries. Within its function the following branch commissions; steel; shipbuilding; automobile industry; mechanical and electro-electronic construction, as well as a Standing Working Group on the Problems of Peace and Disarmament.

A Charter of Demands adopted in 1975 guides its activities. The Metal TUI plays an active role in struggles against transnational corporations, its General Secretary being President of the Special Commission of the WFTU on TNCs; in particular, three transnationals are the objects of the on-going work of the Metal TUI: PHILIPS, GENERAL MOTORS and RENAULT. It develops a great deal of regional activities in cooperation with other organizations.

The 9th International Conference of Trade Unions of Metal Workers, which took place in 1982 in Moscow (September 20-24), was attended by 113 organizations from 70 countries, 60 of which were not members of the TUI. It publishes a monthly bulletin «News» and a bi-monthly «Trade Union Action». At the 10th World Trade Union Congress, the Metal TUI was elected to the WFTU Bureau.

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF MINING AND ENERGY WORKERS (MINING AND ENERGY TUI)

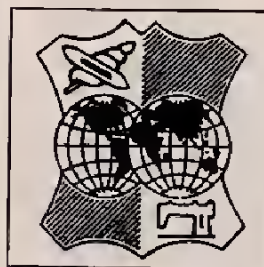


Address: ul. Kopernika 36/40  
00924 Warsaw, Poland  
Telephone: 264316  
General Secretary:  
*Alain Simon (France)*  
Case 535  
263, rue de Paris  
93515 Montreuil Cedex, France  
Telephone: 8518295

Founded as the International Union of Miners' Trade Unions at the Constitutive Conference in Florence, Italy (July 16-19), 1949, its field of action was broadened to include energy workers in 1983. At present it consists of 44 organizations from 41 countries who represent a total of more than 10 million members. At the 9th International Trade Conference, which was held in Prague in 1984 (23-26 October), 55 organizations from 39 countries were present, raising its representation to 14 million workers. Its special commissions are: energy; transnational corporations; health and safety at work; and peace and disarmament. It develops regional activities in cooperation with regional organizations. Two broad international conferences for peace and disarmament have been organized re-

cently. The TUI has made important progress on the road towards uniting miners around the world. It played a first-rank role in international solidarity with the British miners during their strike. It publishes a fortnightly bulletin «Miners of the World».

#### TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF WORKERS IN THE TEXTILE, LEATHER AND FUR INDUSTRY (TEXTILE TUI)



Address: Oplcťalova 57  
11000 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia  
Telephone: (422) 221729  
General Secretary:  
*Jan Kriz (Czechoslovakia)*

Emerging from the merger in 1958, of the International Union of Textile and Clothing Trade Unions, with the International Union of Fur and Leather Workers, both founded in 1949, the TUI today joins 75 organizations from 58 countries, with a total of 12 million members. The 8th Conference of the TUI, held in 1982 in Berlin, capital of the GDR (September 20-24) was attended by 83 organizations from 59 countries, 32 of which were non-members. It cooperates on a regional level with the Latin American Federation of Textile, Clothing and Leather Workers (CLATEXC), the Arab Federation of Textile Workers (FATT) and the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU). It has the following special commission: textile; clothing; fur and leather; and a Working Group on Peace and Disarmament. It pays special attention to coordinating international actions of workers of the BATA and DMC transnationals. It publishes the bulletins «Courrier» and «News». At the 10th World Trade Union Congress, its General Secretary was elected a member of the WFTU Bureau.

**156** TRADE UNIONS INTERNATIONAL OF TRANSPORT WORKERS  
(TRANSPORT TUI)



Address: Váci ut. 73, 1139  
Budapest, Hungary  
Telephone: (361) 209601, 884353  
*General Secretary: K. C. Mathew (India)*

Founded in 1949, the TUI today joins 145 organizations from 72 countries, representing 18 million workers. The International Trade Conference held in Damascus in 1981 (October 25-30) was attended by representatives of 57 non-member organizations from 45 countries. It has set up five branch commissions: maritime; ports; railroads; motor transport; and civil aviation. It publishes a quarterly review «Transport Workers of the World» and a monthly news bulletin. By decision of the WFTU General Council meeting during the 10th World Trade Union Congress, its General Secretary is a member of the WFTU Bureau.

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
OF TRADE UNIONS OF THE GRAPHIC INDUSTRY**



Address: Unter den Linden 15  
108 Berlin, DDR  
Telephone: (372) 2000111  
*President:*  
*Heinz Deckert (GDR)*

Founded in 1961 as a consultative and coordination organization for trade unions around the world in the graphic arts industry, it comprises ten members. The 5th International Consultative Conference, held in Budapest in 1981, was attended by 65 organizations from 58 countries and four international organizations. Since its foundation it has maintained close relations with the WFTU, although it is not an affiliate. It has also deve-

loped cooperation with the International Graphic Federation (ITG of the ICFTU) as well as with national organizations of workers in graphics, regardless of their regional or international affiliation. It publishes a news bulletin which appears ten times a year.

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## THE WFTU TODAY

At the time of publication, the World Federation of Trade Unions comprises:

- \* 15 national organizations from 14 countries in Africa,
- \* 23 national organizations from 21 countries in the Americas,
- \* 22 national organizations from 16 countries in Asia and Oceania,
- \* 11 national organizations from 11 countries in the Middle East,
- \* 13 national organizations from 12 countries in Europe,
- \* 11 Trade Unions Internationals (TUIs).

In addition, trade unions belonging to the TUIs in 9 countries are represented on the General Council, the respective national centres of which do not belong to the WFTU.

In all, the WFTU comprises: 84 national organizations from 74 countries and 1 TUIs. a Standing International Committee which participates in the activities of the WFTU on a consultative basis.

The number of countries represented totals 83. The WFTU represents over 206 million workers from all continents and social systems.

We maintain cooperation agreements with the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), the Organization of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) and Standing Congress of Trade Union Unity of Workers in Latin America (CPUSTAL) and with a whole range of non-affiliated national organizations.

Council (WPC) and cooperate closely with other international democratic organizations such as: the International Union of Students (IUS), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW) amongst others.

We have consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and also participate in the activities of other UN Specialized Agencies. We regularly participate in the activities of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO).

## WFTU PUBLICATIONS

- \* *The World Trade Union Movement* — a monthly review published in Arabic, English, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian.
- \* *Flashes from the Trade Unions* — a weekly news bulletin in Arabic, English, French, Spanish and Russian.
- \* *The Economic Bulletin* — a quarterly publication of the Economic and Social Department in English, French and Spanish.
- \* *Trade Union Training* — an educational bulletin published by the WFTU Education and Solidarity Department in English, French and Spanish.

## WFTU CALLING

Special news programmes on WFTU activities and the trade union movement broadcasted on a regular basis by Radio Prague in German, Arabic, Spanish, French, English, Italian, Czech and Slovak and in conjunction with other radio stations throughout the world.

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**THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS  
1945—1985**

5,000 copies printed in English.

162 printed pages and 16 illustrated pages.

Photo composition carried out in the WFTU printshop.

Printed by Východočeské tiskárny n.p., Havlíčkův Brod.

Distributed: by the WFTU Publications service, Vinohradská 10,  
121 47 Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Published by the World Federation of Trade Unions in cooperation with  
PRACE, of the Czechoslovak trade unions, Prague, October 1985.

Editor in Chief: Luis C. Turiansky.

Photographs taken from the WFTU archives.

Graphics and design: Vladimír Jansky.

First edition.